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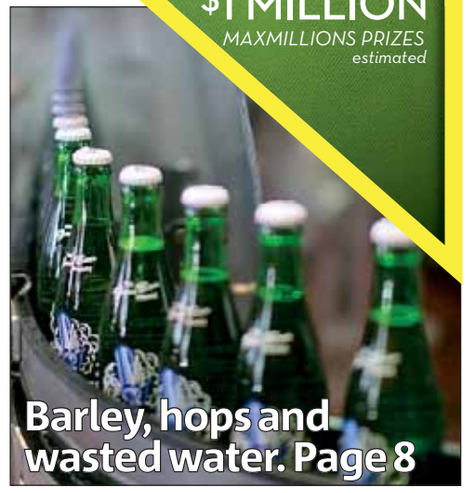
A spring in your step

13 reasons to celebrate the end of winter. Page 9

A skateboarder enjoys the warming weather on Thursday at Harbourfront. LIZ BEDDALL/METRO



Barley, hops and wasted water. Page 8

'Is it racist to say egg white?' The Kohler Report. Page 16

The Breakfast Club turns 30. Page 22

TTC fires managers over Spadina debacle

Transit. Mayor supports move to oust executives in charge of over-budget, overdue subway extension

A week after Mayor John Tory suggested someone would be held to account, the TTC has fired two senior managers in charge of the over-budget, delayed Spadina subway extension.

TTC chief capital officer Sameh Ghaly and chief project manager Andy Bertolo — both long-term executives — were let go Thursday.

"After careful and lengthy consideration, I have determined that a change in leadership within the engineering, construction and expansion group, including the Toronto-York Spadina Subway Extension project, is necessary," said TTC CEO Andy Byford in a memo to staff on Thursday afternoon.

Saying "Torontonians have a right to expect better," Tory issued a statement later Thursday signalling the potential for more dismissals in the future.

"I've been clear about the need for much stronger culture of accountability at city hall ... From time to time, that will and should mean personnel changes, as it would with any other organization," the mayor said from Austin, Tex.

"TTC CEO Andy Byford has my full support in his efforts to restore public confidence in the management of the Toronto-York Spadina Subway Extension." TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

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Economy

Minimum wage gets a bump

Ontario's minimum wage will rise to $11.25 an hour starting Oct. 1, making it the second-highest rate in the country after the Northwest Territories.

The Liberal government enacted legislation in the fall that tied minimum wage to inflation, so every year the new rate will be announced by April 1 to take effect that October.

While the general minimum wage increases from the current $11, the minimum wage for students increases to $10.55 and for liquor servers it rises to $9.80.

The Ministry of Labour says this is the ninth minimum-wage increase since the Liberals took power in 2003. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Etobicoke

Man dies after second shooting

One of two men shot during two separate shootings, just hours apart, in a north Etobicoke apartment complex Tuesday has died.

Malcolm Marfo has been identified as the city's eighth homicide victim, killed after he was shot in an apartment building near Islington Avenue and Dixon Road on Tuesday night.

The 22-year-old was struck multiple times during the second eruption of gunfire in the complex that day.

Police were first called to 2063 Islington Ave. for a shooting shortly after 3 p.m. Upon arrival, they found Ahmed Siyad, 21, suffering from three, non-life-threatening gunshot wounds. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Summer Rayn Butterfly of the Moose Factory Scrappers hugs the cup her team won at the Hershey Center following their championship 1-0 win. Summer Butterfly scored the winning goal and earned MVP honours for the midget A girls' championship. CHRIS SO/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

First Nations kids trek to GTA for tournament

Hockey. Some journey 11,000 kilometres to get to Mississauga

They travelled across frozen lakes, boarded small planes and drove thousands of miles.

Nothing was stopping hockey-playing First Nations children living in far-flung corners of the province from making the journey to Mississauga this week for a Little Native Hockey League tournament.

Armed with sticks, skates and plenty of padding, 178 teams of aboriginal children duked it out on the ice hoping to follow in the footsteps of tournament greats turned NHL stars — Jordin Tootoo, Ted Nolan and Jonathan Cheechoo.

For many who call reserves in remote Ontario home, it was their first time venturing out into the big city. Hockey moms toting around spare gear told stories of their children gaping at skyscrapers and pointing in awe at the city lights as night fell on the GTA.

Nearly a decade ago, one of those children was 17-year-old defender Summer Rayn Butterfly, who hails from Moose Factory, a quaint island community located at the bottom of Hudson's Bay.

"I remember being amazed, looking around at the city when I was younger," she told Torstar News Service. "I come from a small town of only 3,000, and this was such a big place with so many people."

Over eight years worth of tournaments, she's gotten used to the 11,000-kilometre journey from Moose Factory to Mississauga. Those who make the trek contend with Moose River, an unpredictable body of water that can only be crossed by vehicle when the ice freezes over.

Every year, Summer's father Mark says teams keep a watchful eye on weather reports to see if they'll be able to drive their way to Mississauga or if they'll have to hitch a ride across the river on an infrequent train or with a helicopter.

"Parents that brought kids to the tournament are heading home early, some before their team finished playing, because the road was starting to melt," said Mark. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Education. York senate refuses to keep classes cancelled

York University's senate rejected a motion that would have prevented any more classes from resuming as long as teaching and graduate assistants remain on strike.

Two faculties where courses have not yet restarted — environmental studies and liberal arts/professional studies — are to resume Monday. However, the deans of both "will be putting together a list of courses that can be carried out with academic integrity, and they will submit their lists to the Senate Executive late (Friday)" before the full list is posted on York's website.

All classes that have already resumed will continue.

York cancelled all classes March 3 after the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) 3903, representing teaching and graduate assistants and contract faculty, went on strike seeking better job security. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Vote upcoming

University of Toronto teaching assistants will vote Friday on a new contract.

- About 6,000 members of the union have been on strike since rejecting a deal Feb. 27.
- Money is the key issue in the strike, with CUPE saying about two-thirds of undergraduate courses are being taught by non-tenured staff who are paid about $15,000 a year.

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Toronto Reference Library offers year-round comic fix

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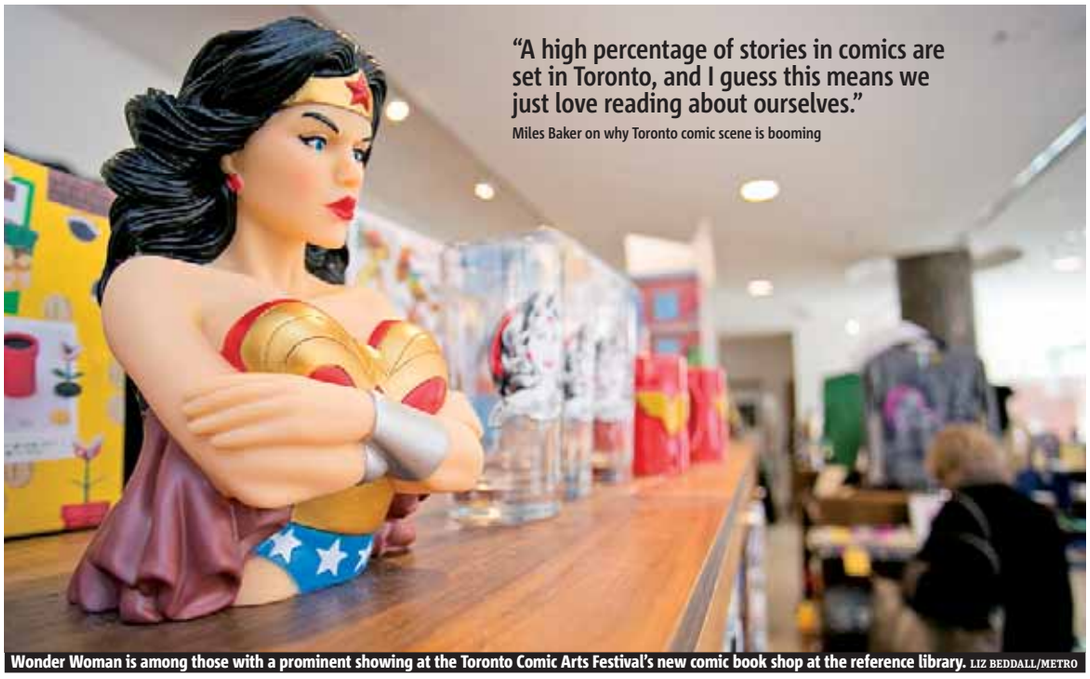

"A high percentage of stories in comics are set in Toronto, and I guess this means we just love reading about ourselves."
Miles Baker on why Toronto comic scene is booming

Wonder Woman is among those with a prominent showing at the Toronto Comic Arts Festival's new comic book shop at the reference library. LIZ BEDDALL/METRO

You can now get your comic book fix all year round at the Toronto Reference Library.

The Toronto Comic Arts Festival's pop-up shop has landed a permanent home at the library.

"We're very excited," said Miles Baker, the store manager and the festival's managing director. "The library sees thousands of people coming through the door every day.

"You can't really beat being at Yonge and Bloor, and the response to the store has been so positive."

All profits from the store will go toward the festival, which draws about 22,000 people each spring.

Called Page and Panel: The TCAF Shop, the store will serve as a gift shop for the Toronto Reference Library.

Along with comic books, the shop will sell graphic novels, art, apparel and other comic-book culture merchandise.

Linda Mackenzie, the Toronto Public Library's director of research and reference libraries, said they always anticipated having a library gift shop. The comic arts festival was chosen after a long search for a third-party vendor.

"We have a great affinity with TCAF because of the way they promote books and literature," Mackenzie says.

The almost 2,000-square-foot shop aims to carry out the festival's mission of promoting the medium of comics, along with the diversity of its creators and its audience, Baker said.

Andrew O'Malley, an English professor at Ryerson University, said diversity in the field is growing partly because a growing number of creators from different cultural backgrounds are working for places such as Marvel and DC Comics.

They're people who used to work independently, he said, and their association with bigger companies means a wider audience.

"There's been a diversification of the form besides what the superhero narrative weaves," O'Malley says.

"Now there are autobiographical narratives telling people's stories from different communities."

DEBORAH HERNANDEZ/FOR METRO

Comicon

Superheroes, masked vigilantes out in full force this weekend

Expect to see a lot of sailor scouts, steampunk heroes, Ghostbusters and masked vigilantes in the city this weekend.

Costumed fans will be flocking to the Metro Toronto Convention Centre for Toronto Comicon.

The event, which opens Friday, is one of many comic conventions that happen in the city each year, a testament to the rapidly growing comics scene in Toronto.

James Armstrong has helped organize comic conventions for the past 15 years, including Comicon, and he says Toronto is a mecca for readers and creators of comics.

He's seen the comics scene explode in popularity to include a more diverse fan base, an expanding age range and a gender split that's approaching 50/50.

"We started off very small, but now we take up a big chunk of the convention centre," he says.

Julia Greco works at The Silver Snail, a comic book shop that's been around for almost 40 years. She says she's definitely seen a wider variety of customers of the past few years.

"We're accepted by a wider audience now that we have all these superhero movies and TV shows," she said.

DEBORAH HERNANDEZ/FOR METRO

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Crime

Officer charged after collision

Toronto police say an off-duty constable is charged in a downtown crash.

Police say they were called to a collision on Adelaide Street East near Jarvis Street around 8 p.m. Tuesday. They say one of the drivers took off.

Const. Brandon Polak, 35, is charged with failure to stop at the scene of an accident. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Crime

Student sexually exploited: Police

An educational assistant at a Toronto high school has been charged after police allege he sexually exploited a disabled student.

Police say the man, who worked at Neil McNeil high school, exploited a student on "numerous" occasions.

Patrick Persaud, 58, is charged with eight counts of sexual exploitation of a person with a disability. THE CANADIAN PRESS

More 'pedestrian days' pitched

Queen Street East and Lee Avenue is one of the areas that could be closed off to cars as The Beach looks to create more 'pedestrian days.' GILBERT NGABO/METRO

The Beach. Walkers would have free rein over Queen Street East under proposal

GILBERT NGABO
gilbert.ngabo@metronews.ca

People in The Beach are looking to reclaim Queen Street East.

And they want to do it with their feet.

With summer right around the corner, community leaders are mulling the idea of closing the street to cars and creating "pedestrian days" throughout the year.

Ward 32 Coun. Mary-Margaret McMahon is leading the charge and soliciting ideas from businesses and residents. The groups are, in turn, learning from neighbouring areas that have experience with pedestrian-only events.

People are concerned about the state of Queen Street East because "it's a resort town" that gets a lot quieter in the winter for lack of outdoor activities, McMahon said.

"We just want our residents to pick up the torch," she said, adding that her office is waiting to hear back from people about what they want to see happen.

While some neighbourhoods are already closing streets to cars on certain days — Kensington Market has pedestrian Sundays, for example — Toronto hasn't exactly mastered the idea, said Alyssa Bird, senior project manager at 8-80 Cities.

Bird's Toronto-based nonprofit is dedicated to turning cities of all stripes into places where people walk, bike and easily access public transit.

Plenty of cities around the world are doing more than Toronto's managed, she said, citing Copenhagen as an example.

There, she said, pedestrians truly have the priority with some streets completely closed to cars, giving more space for restaurants and other attractions.

"We don't have that kind of key feature yet to compete with the best cities in the world," she said.

"Toronto is considered a world-class city and our current transit solutions do not fully reflect that status," Coun. Giorgio Mammoliti writes in a motion headed to executive committee next week. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE FILE

'LRTs will proceed as planned': Tory

Public transit. Couns. Mammoliti, Karygiannis expected to propose motions next week to reopen Finch and Sheppard subway debates

JESSICA SMITH CROSS
jessica.smithcross@metronews.ca

Toronto Mayor John Tory isn't on board with two councillors' efforts to derail the planned LRT lines on Finch and Sheppard Avenue.

Couns. Giorgio Mammoliti and Jim Karygiannis are expected to propose motions at next week's executive committee meeting that would reopen debate on building the lines.

Instead, they want to see subways.

Tory weighed in Thursday, saying, in a nutshell, that subways aren't going to happen.

"Both LRTs will proceed, as planned and funded by the provincial government," he said in a statement to Metro.

Metro's recent Toronto on Track project set out to analyze the demographics of who is served by funded and planned transit projects across the city.

Toronto on Track

Here is some of what Metro has discovered about the planned Finch and Sheppard LRT lines.

- **Commuting.** Approximately 57 per cent of people who live near Sheppard stops drive to work. The figure is 56 per cent for those along Finch. Citywide, about 49 per cent of people hit the car to make their commute.
- **Sheppard Avenue East.** On the eastern part of the proposed line, 67 per cent of people drive to work, one of the highest rates in the city.
- **Travelling by foot?** Not around here. Both areas have relatively few people who walk to work, with some stretches where the percentage of walkers is statistically zero. On average, three per cent of those on the Finch Line walk to work, as do four per cent of those on the Sheppard Line. Both are lower than the city average of seven per cent.

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NE033G115

Ex-premier on corner store beer: 'Why would I care?'

A former Liberal premier of Ontario — who three decades ago proposed selling beer and wine in corner stores — says today he simply does not care about it.

As the current Liberal government crafts reforms to Ontario's buttoned-down alcohol regime, David Peterson's 1980s attempt is often raised as evidence that changes have been a long time coming.

But the man behind it says while it was a good idea at the time, the world has changed..

For Peterson personally, "it's about the least significant thing in public policy" today.

"Why would I care?" he says in a telephone interview. "I care about important things. This is not important to me."

When he introduced the bill — which was defeated in a minority parliament — the reasoning was partly to increase convenience, partly to help small businesses and partly to assist the Ontario wine industry in the pre-free trade era, Peterson says. And the dozens of craft breweries in Ontario did not exist then.

"It's not cheaper to do this and it never was because we have actually a fairly efficient distribution system and the government makes a lot of money off it," he says.

"I thought at the time it was a good thing. It fit a profile for the reasons I expressed: small business, convenience — it wasn't just about the consumer, it was about business, too — and about the Ontario wine industry." THE CANADIAN PRESS

Toronto's Steamn Whistle Brewery uses less water than most to make its beer and has a long-term goal of making its wastewater clean enough to drink. LIZ BEDDALL/METRO

Craft beer industry water-waster: critics

Wastewater management. Craft companies aiming to reach environmentally friendly standards of multinational rivals

JESSICA SMITH CROSS
jessica.smithcross@metronews.ca

Ontario craft breweries are working to catch up to bigger competitors on a key metric — and it's not taste.

It's all about water and sustainability. "Some of these companies are primarily trained to produce a high-quality craft beer," said Kevin Jones, president of Oakville-based consulting firm Bloom. "They've not necessarily been trained to manage water and wastewater."

There's a trend toward changing that as demand for craft beer surges and as many breweries look to sharpen their edge against multinationals.

Conserving water and expelling fewer byproducts — like yeast and barley — into sewers is, of course, good for the environment. It's also good for a company's bottom line because the more water they use and the more wastewater they flush the more they pay.

Small-scale brewing is thirsty work. Ontario's craft brewers typically use eight to 12 litres of water to produce one litre of beer. Multinational companies use only three or four litres of water to produce the same amount.

Bloom's working with several breweries to make changes that can lead to big results. In some cases, it's as simple as not using a hose to flush stray brewing product down the drain.

Sybil Taylor, spokeswomen for Toronto's Steam Whistle, said the company has been monitoring water usage for some time.

Most of the water used in the brewing process goes toward cleaning bottles, tanks and kegs, she said. So, Steam Whistle reuses the final round of rinse water from a set of kegs for the first wash of the next round. It also uses a high-efficiency bottle washer and captures the steam created by the brewing process, condenses it and uses it in the cleaning process.

Fact

4 litres

Amount of water that goes into the average bottle of craft beer

ROM celebrates 101st birthday

Gurgle the dinosaur makes a special weekday trip to the Royal Ontario Museum Thursday, in celebration of the museum's 101st birthday. Janet Carding, the museum's director and CEO, said of the day: "I'm delighted to see the museum today filled with happy families enjoying March Break with its theme of 'the future.'"

LIZ BEDDALL/METRO

Spring erases winter's chills

Sounds and sights.
Birdsong, baseball, new grass and cherry blossoms herald return of warmer times

Lilies, growing wild at Todmorden Mills Wildflower Preserve, are one of the great things about spring in Toronto. MARGARET BREAM/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

It was horrible, but we made it. Winter is over. February was the coldest month in Toronto history. Friday is the first day of spring. Here are some things to remove the salt stains from your soul.

Birdsong. You can hear them before you see them: songbirds like the robin and the red-winged blackbird, auguring warmth and rebirth. The season's soundtrack.

Baseball. The boys of summer actually start playing meaningful games in April (opening day is on the 5th).

Chlorophyll. It's the secret sauce of photosynthesis, and every spring it ends winter's icy, salty whiteness.

Shorts and T-shirts. Put your parkas and long johns in the cellar; you have nothing to lose but your chains.

Smells. Winter is eerily odourless. Spring has smells. They aren't always pleasant, but the funk of mud and grass and rain mean the world is coming back to life.

Wildflowers. April showers bring May flowers. Violets, trilliums and buttercups are early bloomers in Ontario.

Cycling. It will be rusty and deflated but your bike can probably come out of the garage now.

The patio at the Black Bull Tavern. Order a gin and tonic. Watch people walk by. Feel the sun on your face.

Ice cream. It's hard to imagine, but there will soon be a time when you feel too hot. Ice cream will be your antidote.

Vitamin D. It comes from the sun, it's good for your bones, and according to a recent study, most people don't get enough.

Barbecues. Everything is better outside. That includes grilling meat.

Cherry blossoms in High Park. They're a shade of pink that doesn't exist anywhere else. And they only last for about a week. The High Park trees will soon be flowering. There's another cluster on Centre Island.

Working streetcars. Road salt and ice are too much for Toronto's geriatric streetcar fleet. By April, they should be back to puttering along the tracks with some semblance of regularity.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

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GT model shown

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Budget

Police board, union reach tentative deal on new contract

The Toronto Police Services Board and the union representing its members have reached a tentative deal on a new contract for officers — one that could increase the bottom budget line.

Toronto Police Association President Mike McCormack says the deal was reached in the early morning hours Thursday after a marathon session that spilled over from Wednesday. The details of the deal are secret, with a blackout in effect until the TPA's members can ratify the contract. McCormack said he expects that will happen within the next week.

Though outgoing Chief Bill Blair presented what he called a zero increase budget to the city — who just finalized each line item at a meeting last month — it was expected the union would be asking for salary increases. With the majority of the police budget spent on salary, some 90 per cent, it's anticipated that budget will now increase with the new deal. By just how much is still unclear.

Police board chair Alok Mukherjee said he wanted to wait until the deal was ratified to say whether he thought it was fair for taxpayers.

"If you want to know, am I personally happy? Yes, I'm personally happy," Mukherjee said.

He acknowledged that the public is ready to see a change in police spending, but said he will wait until ratification to comment further.

McCormack, who would not discuss the content of the tentative contract, said their bargaining team would not be taking the arrangement to its members if it wasn't a deal they could accept.

"We support the deal," he said. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Matt Morrish of Cycle Solutions demonstrates a fat-tire bicycle at Ashbridge's Bay, in recent wintry weather. Spring is here today and, as a researcher on happiness notes, the cities with the most cyclists are the happiest.
TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Cheer up, Toronto!

Be happy. As the world celebrates Happiness Day, studies show Toronto falls behind in this factor

GILBERT NGABO
gilbert.ngabo@metronews.ca

Take heart, Toronto.

Many a study may still rank Toronto low when it comes to matters of happiness, but some people say it simply isn't so.

"Come on man, we are happy," said Abdulaziz Muftuh, a Toronto taxi driver for the past five years.

As the world celebrates International Happiness Day on Friday, social studies continue to show Hogtown lags behind other Canadian cities in the smiley quotient.

Out of 25 cities surveyed by Jetpac City Guides last year, Toronto ranked 23rd. The city hit rock bottom in the latest report done by Ottawa-based Centre for the Study of Living Standards, analyzing people's satisfaction with their life in different cities.

But, in the spirit of Happiness Day, there could be a positive spin. For one, Toronto doesn't lag behind others by a large margin. And, Canada is generally doing exceptionally well in happiness rankings compared to other nations.

The last World Happiness Report ranked the nation sixth, and, in 2013, Forbes Magazine declared The True North third happiest country in the world, right behind Norway and Switzerland.

Muftuh likes to think Toronto follows those trends.

"I see a lot of happy faces among my clients every night here," he said.

Hide Idera, who works with the Happy Science Institute, said people in Toronto are generally kind, relaxed and peaceful, all of which are signs of a happy bunch.

"People speak to each other on the street, even when they don't share a lot, background and everything," he said.

So what's the secret to keeping that happy face?

Idera, who practises Buddhism, thinks it starts with one's mind.

"Being happy is simple: Just purify your mind, give love and be enlightened," he said.

Well, that and a bit more, apparently.

Canadian Institute For Advanced Research senior fellow John Helliwell once authored a report that suggested the happiest cities are the ones with most cyclists.

In more recent research, Helliwell and his colleagues found that good governance — like the kind that curbs corruption and makes leaders trustworthy — is a key component of people's happiness.

Food for thought, Toronto, if we want to dethrone Kingston as the so-called happiest city in Canada.

NEW**DRONE**WORLD **Metro looks at how drone technology is changing the skies in Canada** / Wednesday— Droning becomes big business / Thursday— Officers aren't using drones to spy... yet / Friday— You can make friends with #droneselfies

Read it all at metronews.ca

They're in the zone, flying drones

Recreation. Cheaper costs and increased acceptance have led to a surge in hobby droning

IRA LAMCJA
ira.lamcja@metronews.ca

Alexander Knight readies his drone by turning a switch on his remote control. The propellers make a loud humming noise as the drone takes off. He flies it higher and higher until it's a small black dot against a blue sky.

"You just need to be able to see it," he says, pointing at the horizon.

Knight, a self-styled citizen journalist, drives around Toronto documenting what he might deem as environmental hazards. He then blogs his experiences at alexanderknight.ca. It's a hobby for him. He makes no income off it.

Today, he's observing the cleanup of what he says is contamination from a rezoned industrial plant — and is happy to find, during the 15-minute flight, that the cleanup is finished.

With drones coming in at cheaper prices, it's now easier than ever to acquire and fly one. On Amazon, a Phantom DJI quadcopter with a GoPro camera costs around $1,000, and the Parrot AR drones start at around $500 and can go up to $900. On the lower end, Hubsan models cost around $100 to $200, though their camera capabilities are more limited.

Drone enthusiast Alexander Knight points to an image on a screen while his drone (not pictured) flies over a field in Toronto. IRA LAMCJA/METRO

The price, along with increasing cultural acceptance, has led to a new pastime of hobby droning. Aerial photography and videography are popular choices, as Twitter and Instagram will attest. #Droneselfies is devoted to aerial images of people taken from up above. Even Martha Stewart is a fan.

The trend has left Transport Canada scrambling to rein in hobbyists who stray too far. The most pressing concern for the agency has been daredevil flyers operating too close to airports, which can interfere with commercial airline planes. Transport Canada's new rules limit this, as hobbyists can no longer fly closer than nine kilometres from any airport, heliport or aerodrome.

Knight says he hasn't had issues with Transport Canada but he worries that may change as regulations try to keep up with the advancing technology.

Patrick Dinnen however has had to rein in his photographic pursuits. The "creative technologist" based in Toronto had been experimenting with lightwriting — the photographing of trails of light through long exposure settings — when he bought a Phantom DJI drone.

One night he and two friends, Brent Marshall and Dré Labre, attached custom LED lights to the drone and flew it over various Toronto parks, turning on the camera and capturing its flight path, exposing trails of ethereal light and colour. They dubbed the paintings Weird Illuminated Sky Paintings (WISPs).

"What we did with WISP is not really open to us anymore," Dinnen says, as Transport Canada no longer allows nighttime flying for hobbyists.

But for some enthusiasts, the appeal is the drone itself, as many have taken to making their own.

Knight orders the parts for his drones online through websites such as eBay. And there are resources among the hobbyist community to help those who need it.

DYIdrones.com, a U.S.-based website devoted to connecting drone fans with peers, functions as a social network for hobbyists and amateur enthusiasts.

The site's goal is to make drone development easier and cheaper for everyone while educating people on the technology. Discussions on the site can feature anything from where to buy certain parts to how to assemble a drone.

The cost of making a drone is usually lower than buying an off-the-shelf product, and assembly doesn't require advanced knowledge of mechanics or robotics.

Some Canadian retailers have popped up and begun offering drone parts for hobbyists. Canada Drones, founded four years ago by Dany Thivierge in Mississauga, Ont., started out with the online community at DIYdrones.com. Thivierge realized there was a real need to supply parts to his "fellow geeks." Today, Thivierge counts almost 4,000 customers.

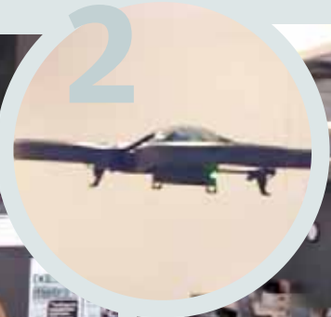
Weird Illuminated Sky Paintings (WISPs) were created with drones and LEDs. CONTRIBUTED

"The growth is what surprised me the most," he says, adding that his sales are well over the million-dollar goal that many businesspeople have when first starting out.

Thivierge is optimistic for future sales in the summer, hinting at some "exciting products" on the way.

"People keep surprising me with never-before-imagined applications for this technology," he says.

In pictures: Metro's Ira Lamcja tests a Parrot drone



1 Remote. Works on most devices

Flying the Parrot AR drone is serious business. I used an iPad most of the time as a remote control but you can also use an iPhone as well as an Android phone or tablet.

2 Camera. Decent, by 2000s standards

The image quality on the camera attached to this drone is surprisingly good. A great deal of detail is captured, and although there is pixelation when the images are enlarged, the photos are still clear, resembling cellphone images from the early 2000s.

3 Handling. Beware of tight spaces

With time, practice and many crash scenes, piloting becomes easier and more instinctive. The Parrot's Styrofoam protection makes it ideal for flying indoors, but beware of flying in small or tight spaces. While the flip function is available, allowing the drone to somersault in the air, I don't recommend it indoors. I tried it once and took out the light in my living room. The Parrot survived.

What's in Your Beauty Products?

The average woman applies more than 500 chemicals daily.

Every day millions of women slap on body moisturizer, apply lipstick or mascara without a second thought about what they are putting on their skin. A study from the UK claims that the average woman applies more than 500 chemicals to her body every day during her beauty routine.

Why should you be concerned?

Chemicals such as parabens (a synthetic preservative in everything from toothpaste to shampoo) and phthalates (a class of chemicals that are found in many "fragranced" beauty products such as lotions, perfumes and deodorants) are classified as xenoestrogens. Xenoestrogens mimic our natural estrogens creating hormone chaos by increasing the total amount of estrogen, resulting in a condition called estrogen dominance. Estrogen dominance has been implicated in many conditions including: breast and prostate cancer, obesity, infertility, endometriosis, uterine fibroids, early onset puberty, hormonal acne and PMS.

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So starting now, read labels and stay informed, check out The Environmental Working Group website www.ewg.org as well as Campaign for Safe Cosmetics www.safecosmetics.org for more information about how you can protect yourself.

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Newlyweds share their first dance at the ACC

Jennifer Rogers, right, and Scott Protomanni (No. 19) enjoy their first dance after tying the knot at the Toronto Maple Leafs' Blue & White Wedding, the first wedding ever at the Air Canada Centre, in Toronto on Thursday. By way of fan votes and a selection committee, Jennifer and Scott triumphed over hundreds of wedding hopefuls through a contest on MapleLeafs.com. AARON VINCENT ELKAIM/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Tories seek support for ISIL mission

Politics. Federal Conservatives plan to ask opposition parties to support extension

In a challenge to the opposition, Foreign Affairs Minister Rob Nicholson said Thursday the government wants all-party backing of a motion to extend the military mission against extremists in Iraq and Syria.

But the New Democrats and Liberals continued to express wary skepticism about the government's conduct of the deployment, which has seen one special-forces soldier killed in a friendly-fire incident with northern Iraq's Kurdish forces.

Nicholson made the call for unity in a speech to several dozen Ottawa-based foreign diplomats who were invited to Foreign Affairs headquarters. He emphasized the threat that the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) directly poses to Canada and its allies.

The speech was Nicholson's first in his new portfolio and came a day after Prime Minister Stephen Harper announced he will ask Parliament next week to expand the military mission.

Nicholson said he was proud of the decision to extend the mission and "the moral clarity" Harper possesses.

"I can also tell you that he will ask all parties to come together as Canadians," Nicholson said. "He will ask them to support our government's operation to degrade and destabilize this gang of thugs."

NDP foreign affairs critic Paul Dewar said his party wants to support civilians at risk from ISIL's advances but he accused the government of not being transparent about what the military mission entails.

"There is so little definition as to what our role is there, our strategy is," said Dewar. "They have to explain how it is that Canada has ended up on the front lines of this war."

Joyce Murray, the Liberal defence critic, agrees ISIL is a threat to Canada and the world and that the country has a role to play in fighting it.

"We cannot speculate about a motion that has not been presented to Parliament," she said in an email.

"What we do know is that this prime minister has not been open and honest about what our troops are mandated to do in Iraq."

Nicholson said Canada must expand the mission because ISIL poses a continuing threat that will grow if left unchecked. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Quebec

Supreme Court rules in favour of Jesuit school

The Supreme Court of Canada upheld the religious freedoms of a Montreal Jesuit school's right to teach Catholicism as it deems fit. The court said the province had infringed on the school's rights by denying it an exemption from secular laws. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Mexico

Canadian found dead on beach

A Canadian man has been found beaten to death on a beach at a Mexican resort.

Prosecutors in the state of Baja California Sur say Marty Gary Atwood, 50, appears to have been beaten with a blunt object. The prosecutors' office said the cause of death was severe head trauma and a skull fracture. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Florida

Department of health withdraws order against spa

The Florida Department of Health has withdrawn cease-and-desist orders against a health spa where two Ontario aboriginal girls were treated. The department believed the spa was operating without a licence. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Israeli PM tones down the hardline rhetoric

Middle East. Netanyahu changes his tune following diplomatic backlash

Days after winning re-election, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Thursday backtracked from hardline statements against the establishment of a Palestinian state in the face of a diplomatic backlash.

In the closing days of his campaign, Netanyahu said there could be no Palestinian state while regional violence and chaos persist — conditions that could rule out progress on the issue for many years. The comments, aimed at appealing to his nationalist voter base, angered the Obama administration, which views a two-state solution as a top foreign policy priority.

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, seen Thursday at a special meeting of Palestinian leadership, says he doesn't see a serious attempt by Israel to work toward a two-state solution. MAJDI MOHAMMED/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Split remains

The outcome of the Israeli election will only deepen polarization, experts say.

- Benjamin Netanyahu's anti-Arab campaign rhetoric and his rejection of a Palestinian state, they say, will further splinter American Jews into hard left and right camps, and intensify conflicts over what it means to be loyal to the Jewish state.

Netanyahu said in a TV interview Thursday that he remains committed to Palestinian statehood — if conditions in the region improve — and to the two-state vision first spelled out in a landmark 2009 speech at Israel's Bar Ilan University.

"I haven't changed my policy," he said in a full interview with MSNBC's Andrea Mitchell Reports, excerpts of which were to be shown on NBC's Nightly News later on. "I never retracted my speech."

At the time, he said he would agree to a demilitarized Palestinian state that recognizes Israel as a Jewish state.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Tunisia

ISIL takes credit for deadly attack

The Islamic State group claimed responsibility Thursday for the attack that killed 21 people at the National Bardo Museum.

But Tunisian authorities said the two slain gunmen had no clear links to extremists, and analysts said existing militant cells are merely being inspired by the group.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Colorado

Woman accused of cutting open pregnant stranger

Court documents show a woman accused of cutting open a pregnant woman and removing her unborn baby had told her own family she was pregnant.

The documents obtained Thursday say suspect Dynel Lane asked her husband to accompany her to a pre-natal appointment on Wednesday.

When he came home, the documents say, she reported having a miscarriage and showed him a baby gasping for breath in a bathtub. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Los Angeles. Obesity rates up despite protective laws

A much-hailed law that restricted the opening of new standalone fast-food restaurants in one of the poorest sections of Los Angeles did not curb obesity or improve diets, a new study found.

City lawmakers passed the zoning ordinance in 2008 that limited the opening or expansion of fast-food outlets in a 32-square-mile area south of Interstate 10 that struggles with high obesity rates and other health problems.

The law, believed to be the first effort of its kind by a major city to improve public health, did not ban new eateries in strip malls.

The research by the Rand Corp. think-tank found that obesity rates in South Los Angeles continued to rise after passage of the law.

Health experts said a single intervention would not reverse the obesity problem. People also have to exercise and make lifestyle changes, they said.

"It's not just about limiting unhealthy food but increasing access to healthy food," said Alex Ortega, a professor of public health at the University of California, Los Angeles, who had no role in the study.

Before the fast-food ordinance, 63 per cent of South Los Angeles residents reported being overweight or obese compared with 57 per cent in other parts of the county. Three years after the ordinance went into effect, 75 per cent of South Los Angeles residents reported being overweight or obese compared with 58 per cent in other parts of the county.

Supporters said the ordinance worked because it prevented chains from opening new restaurants at major intersections with their own drive-thru windows and parking lots. They acknowledged it will take some time to see health gains but noted that the area has seen farmers markets and community gardens in recent years.

"We never said this ordinance was the silver bullet" to solving the obesity problem, said Gwen Flynn of the Community Health Councils. "As long as we can make sure people have more options, that's the important thing."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Quoted

"There's no evidence that diets have improved more in South L.A."

Roland Sturm, Rand senior economist

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†0% APR Purchase Financing is available on select new 2015 Mazda models. Terms vary by model. Based on a representative agreement using an offered pricing of $17,690 for the new 2015 Mazda3 GX (D43X65AA00) with a financed amount of $18,000, the cost of borrowing for a 36-month term is $0, monthly payment is $500, total finance obligation is $18,000. Offer includes freight, P.D.E. and fees. Offer excludes PST/QST/HST.
‡Signing Bonuses are available on retail cash purchase/finance/lease of select new, in-stock 2014/2015/2016 Mazda models from March 3 - 31, 2015. Bonus amounts vary by model. $500 Signing Bonus applies to all 2015 Mazda2, Mazda3, Mazda5, and Mazda6 models. $750 Signing Bonus applies to all 2015/2016 CX-5 models. Maximum $1,000 Signing Bonus only available on 2015 CX-9 and MX-5 models. Signing Bonus will be deducted from the negotiated price before taxes. See dealer for complete details.

CRTC requires $25 'skinny basic' TV

Cable and satellite. Regulator also orders service providers to offer pick-and-pay or small bundle packages

Cable and satellite service providers will soon have to offer consumers an "entry-level" television service, at a cost of no more than $25 a month.

Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission released the new requirements on Thursday, following its lengthy Let's Talk TV hearings last fall.

The new, trimmed-down basic packages must include local channels in each service area, as well as channels currently on the CRTC's mandatory distribution list such as public interest, educational and legislature channels where they're available.

U.S.-based channels that are currently free over the air in most major Canadian markets near the border — so-called 4-plus-1 channels — will also be included.

It's the first time television service pricing has been regulated in Canada since 1999 and makes it the only jurisdiction in the industrialized world to require that TV distribution companies offer a basic selection of channels.

The national broadcast regulator says the requirement to offer a trimmed-down basic package will take effect by March 2016.

The CRTC says TV viewers will then be able to supplement the so-called "skinny basic" package with either individual channels available through a pick-and-pay model, or what it calls small, "reasonably priced" bundled channel packages.

But service providers will have until the end of next year to offer both a la carte channels and theme packages.

Customers who are happy with their current TV offerings won't have to switch.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Market Minute

DOLLAR 78.58¢ (-0.97¢)

Natural gas: $2.813 (-10.7¢)
Dow Jones: 17,959.03 (-117.16)

TSX 14,873.93 (-88.31)

OIL $43.96 US (-70¢)

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D&G boycott gains momentum

Protesters rally outside the Dolce & Gabbana store in London, Thursday. Domenico Dolce and Stefano Gabbana denigrated surrogacy and same-sex parents in an interview with an Italian magazine last week, prompting Elton John to call for a boycott of the brand. Stars including Martina Navratilova and talk-show host Andy Cohen quickly hopped on board. TIM IRELAND/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Food

Giant doughnut flies off shelves

A Southern California doughnut shop has come up with yet another guilty pleasure gone viral: a gigantic doughnut stuffed with a Pop Tart filling.

Donut Bar, with outlets in Fountain Valley and San Diego, calls the one-pound creation the Big Poppa Tart Donut. Donut Bar sells about 150 of the doughnuts daily, at $4 US each. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Retail

Target getting $1.6B tax break

Target Corp.'s swift exit from Canada will reap about $1.6 billion US in tax breaks for the retailer in the United States, according to documents filed with the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission. The filings say Target made a "strategic shift" in its business when it chose to exit Canada.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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CITY BUDGET PASSAGE IS GOOD NEWS FOR TTC CUSTOMERS

ANDY BYFORD
CEO
TORONTO TRANSIT COMMISSION

Last week's City Council vote to approve Mayor John Tory's first budget was good news for TTC customers.

The budget included an unprecedented $90-million investment in TTC service. It comes after three years of lobbying on our part for increased, affordable funding to enable us to meet surging ridership, to decrease wait times and to reduce crowding levels across the network.

I am particularly pleased that City Council supported the vast majority of the initiatives that we tabled last fall – proposals designed to reverse the damaging cuts imposed on the TTC in 2011 and 2012 – so we may begin delivering improved service on all modes.

Specifically, we will now work to introduce additional express bus services, restore minimum 10-minute-or-better service on our busiest routes, all-day service to the vast majority of routes, added trains to rush-hour service on the subway, and the conversion to all-door boarding on all 11 streetcar routes. Service reliability will also be enhanced with the deployment of more incident responders, and additional route and station supervisors to keep the network moving.

When we launched our Five-Year Corporate Plan to modernize the TTC in 2013, I said then that we needed two things to enable that plan to succeed: time and money. I am, therefore, relieved and grateful that additional funding has been forthcoming and that we have the support of the Mayor and Council in driving improvement.

This successful budget outcome means we can now accelerate our work and deliver tangible improvements sooner rather than later.

I recognize that a lot remains to be done before we have delivered on our vision of a transit system that makes Toronto proud, but we are that much closer today.

LINE 3 SCARBOROUGH GETS AN UPGRADE

On Sunday, March 22, Line 3 Scarborough will celebrate its 30th anniversary – the end of its designed life expectancy. The same day, Line 3 riders will see the TTC introduce newly wrapped cars, as part of an aggressive maintenance plan to improve service reliability over the next ten years.

The wrap design ties into our new approach to subway line numbers and colours to help customers navigate the system.

Two trains will be overhauled with the new durable vinyl exterior finish as an alternative paint and body work. Over the next few months, the interior will also see a complete makeover, with new finishes on floors and walls, and a new seating configuration to provide better wheelchair access.

WEEKEND LINE 1 CLOSURE – ST GEORGE TO LAWRENCE WEST STATIONS

On Saturday, March 21 and Sunday, March 22, there will be no service between St George and Lawrence West stations on Line 1 due to scheduled work on tracks, signals and switches. Frequent replacement bus service will operate between St George and Lawrence West stations, bypassing Eglinton West station due to work on the Metrolinx Eglinton-Crosstown.

Customers travelling from Eglinton West station must use the 32 Eglinton West bus to reach replacement buses at the intersection of Eglinton Ave. W. and Bathurst St. The TTC will have Wheel-Trans buses available at Lawrence West, Eglinton West and St George stations to accommodate customers who need them.

During the two-day closure, crews will replace 600 metres of rail, upgrade switches and maintain in signals. Lawrence West, Eglinton West, St Clair West, Spadina and St George stations will be open. Glencairn and Dupont stations will be closed. Regular subway service will resume on Monday, March 23 at 6 a.m.

EMPLOYEE PROFILE

Name: Linda Bockus **Position:** Customer Information Representative **Years of Service:** 33

Working at the Customer Information Centre as a transit professional has been very rewarding. I have personally helped over 3.5 million callers get to where they want to go, using The Better Way. As a traveller to many foreign cities, I can appreciate the challenges using an unfamiliar transit system. I try to give the easiest, most precise directions to patrons. As I retire I would like to thank all of my coworkers for their friendship and support through the years. I know I am only a phone call away from resolving any transit related questions that I might have.

Weekly Customer Service Report

Week ending March 18, 2015

	Actual % / Target %	
Subway (1 2 3 4) – Deliver a punctual service	97% / 97%	✓
Bus – Deliver reliable headway	68% / 65%	✓
Streetcar – Deliver reliable headway	65% / 70%	✗

DO YOU HAVE A QUESTION FOR THE TTC? SEND AN EMAIL TO TOMOVES@TTC.CA

ASK TTC

I am interested to know your procedure for cleaning subway stations. As I travel to different stations I would say that while the stations are old, they are well maintained. However, I would say Broadview Station stands out as a subway station that does not appear to receive the same cleaning.

Thanks, Salima

Subway stations receive a light cleaning daily, medium cleaning on a weekly basis and heavy cleaning monthly.
Light cleaning involves sweeping, dusting, garbage collection and mopping up spills. Medium cleaning involves power washing bus bays and stairwells, while heavy duty cleaning involves power washing platforms and station walls. You may have noticed more garbage recently because of the melting snow. In mid-April, the TTC will undertake a spring cleaning blitz of all stations. Remember, customers can do their part by putting litter and recycling in bins located on every platform and in all TTC stations.

Thanks! TTC

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Free Wi-Fi is now available at select TTC subway stations. Visit tconnect.ca or ttc.ca for details.

VOICES

SILENCE DOESN'T LEAD TO CHANGE

THE KOHLER REPORT
By Rebecca Kohler

Would you like a biscotti with your coffee or would you prefer a conversation about a white cop shooting a black man in Ferguson? They'd certainly both give you something to chew on.

If you haven't heard, Starbucks has launched an awareness campaign called Race Together in which it's asking its baristas in U.S. stores to strike up conversations with customers about race relations. If you're wondering if Pumpkin Spice is considered a race, it's not.

The good news is that people of all races have united on social media in HATING this idea, so maybe that's a great start?

I don't like to be a fence-sitter, but I'm really torn on this one. Part of me likes it, the other part is ever so slightly throwing up in my mouth. Let's discuss.

The cynical, vomitus side of me sees this is a corporation possibly capitalizing on the idea of discrimination. "Hey! Maybe if we act like we care about this issue, people will buy more rustic egg-white breakfast sandwiches!... Oh no, is it racist to say egg-white? Change that to no-yolk."

This reminds me of Bell's Let's Talk campaign, which was Bell Canada's way of raising awareness about mental illness.

While I'm all for hearing about people's struggles with depression, etc. (I have my own), it turned my tum to see them hashtag their stories on Facebook with the phone company's name.

Should an admission of having felt suicidal double as an advertisement for an Internet service provider?

There's also just the fact that this idea seems impractical.

What happens if a discussion gets deep and the barista can't keep up with the orders? If Race Together were happening in Canada and I was in line, I wouldn't want to find myself resenting a well-meaning conversation about whether or not a niqab is appropriate attire for a Canadian citizenship ceremony.

And I'm usually in a rush when I go to Starbucks — I wouldn't want to look flippant should someone ask me about Canada's treatment of indigenous people: "Yeah, yeah, it's terrible. Gotta go!"

Then there's the part of me that thinks this is a great idea that should be commended and a lead that should be followed.

Let's talk ... but maybe not right now

I'm usually in a rush when I go to Starbucks — I wouldn't want to look flippant should someone ask me about Canada's treatment of indigenous people: "Yeah, yeah, it's terrible. Gotta go!"

No, it's not perfect, in that, as many have pointed out, the baristas aren't race relations experts and the Starbucks customer demographic is largely young and privileged.

But does that mean they just shouldn't talk? Is that ever a better solution? Maybe if they talk to each other they will learn things. There was a time I didn't know how to tie my shoes — should I have kept silent on the matter because I was an ignoramus?

No. Had I not conversed about laces with my parents, I'd be tripping all over myself to this day.

As with Bell Let's Talk campaign — at least people were talking, right? The more this stuff gets talked about, the better. Discussions spark thoughts, questions and curiosities. Convos in Starbucks will bleed into workplace and home. Silence doesn't lead to change, conversations do.

This softer side of me also believes that the man behind this ideological plan, Starbucks chief executive Howard Schultz, is genuinely trying to do a good thing (while also selling scones).

Others aren't so convinced, wanting to know, for instance, if he's so "concerned," why only 16 per cent of Starbucks executives are people of colour?

Well, that's an interesting statistic.

Maybe that's the kind of thing you could discuss with a barista at Starbucks — a barista who might then discuss it with her manager who might mention the conversation at an annual Starbucks conference.

Maybe it'll get into Howard Schultz's ear and he'll take it to heart and make change? Or, yeah, I guess we could just not talk at all.

Rebecca Kohler is a standup comic, writer, actor, gymnast, lawyer and chemist. (Some of this isn't true.) Follow her on Twitter at @becca_kohler

Happy face/Sad face

From cooking in Walmart to getting kicked out of Ikea, Metro weighs in on the news that made headlines this week:

METH LAB BUST AT WALMART

Where's the health and safety committee when you need it? A Walmart washroom in Indiana was shut down after an employee discovered a mobile meth lab inside a backpack left there. Perhaps the weirdest part of this story is that this was not an isolated incident, with others cooking up a storm at various Walmarts over the years. Police say mobile labs are a growing trend with those who'd rather not risk the chance of explosions in their own homes, but we don't think this is what the Walmart people meant by Save Money, Live Better.

A CLASSIC TAIL

Dear heartbroken person whose beloved pet went missing: We hope you will find some measure of comfort in this story. Kevin the orange tabby went AWOL in South Carolina a few years back, but turned up in Palm Springs this week when a woman found him hitched to her U-Haul trailer. Once reunited with Kevin, his owner joked that he's seen more of the country than she has, but if Kevin has taught her — and us — anything, surely it's that there is always hope.

BUDDHA BAN

In a move that's about as far from enlightenment as you can get, three men in Myanmar will spend the next 2-1/2 years in prison for posting an image of Buddha wearing headphones on their Facebook page. After getting complaints, the trio apologized for their "ignorance," but that didn't stop the judge from convicting them of denigrating the religion. In a small, symbolic act of solidarity, we're republishing the offending image here.

BELLE ÉPOQUE

Model life: Now with more croissants. If France passes a proposed law, it'll join other countries like Spain, Italy and Israel in banning the use of extremely thin models in the fashion industry. The legislation would require agencies to get medical certificates from models to prove that they have a healthy BMI, and models would have to get routine checkups.

CONSUMERS JUST WANNA HAVE FUN

Ikea always seemed like such a fun company with its ball rooms, delightfully — albeit suspiciously — cheap breakfasts and the über-funky spellings. But even cool corporations have their limits. The Swedish multinational drew its line in the sand with giant hide-and-seek parties in the Netherlands that drew thousands to Ikea stores. The furniture giant said that while it doesn't like being a spoilsport, safety comes first. We're not sure where the party is being moved to, but it's probably best they steer clear of Walmarts in Indiana for the time being.

metro

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Penning a list of Sean's great roles

Analysis. The Gunman star says he forgets films he's worked on within a week of wrapping. Here's a rundown to jog his memory

Sean Penn stars in The Gunman, which opens this weekend. CONTRIBUTED

Sean Penn is back on the big screen this weekend in The Gunman, his first leading role in almost four years. It can't rightly be called a comeback because he never really went away. Supporting roles in The Secret Life of Walter Mitty and Gangster Squad have generated column inches, but in the last five years he has devoted more energy to raising money for earthquake relief in Haiti than being a movie star.

In the film, he plays Special Forces military contractor Jim Terrier. By day he protects foreign workers in the Democratic Republic of Congo, but he moonlights as a hired gunman for big corporations. His assassination of the Congolese Mining Minister forces him to flee the country and changes the course of his entire life.

It's what Penn jokingly calls "geriaction," an action movie starring a middle-aged actor. Other than that, don't expect to hear him speak a great deal about his new film. "Honestly within a week after I've finished shooting a film I've almost forgotten it," he said recently.

In February he was honoured with an honorary César Award for "choosing his films with sensitivity and commitment." At the ceremony, the "legend in his lifetime" watched a clip reel spanning the width and breadth of his career, including excerpts from Dead Men Walking, Mystic River and Milk.

In Focus

RICHARD CROUSE

Later the actor said, "I remember playing none of those scenes. I remembered the movies (but) I saw myself in scenes with actors I didn't even know I'd ever worked with!"

To jog Mr. Penn's memory here's a list of some of his memorable roles:

1. In Milk, Penn won a best actor Oscar playing the real-life Harvey Milk, a native New Yorker who became America's first openly gay man to be elected to public office. Penn fully embraces Milk, from the thick New York accent that characterized his speech to the goofy grin that endeared the real-life activist to his supporters, both gay and straight.

2. This Must Be The Place is a rare thing. I speak of that elusive beast *Pennigma Seanun comoedia* — the Sean Penn comedy. He plays a retired and world-weary American rock star living with his wife (Frances McDormand) in Ireland. This is Sean Penn like we've never seen him before. With poufy hair, black toenail polish and affected vocal cadence — like Andy Warhol on Quaaludes — he creates an intriguing, strange character.

3. In Hollywood dramedy Hurly Burly, Penn played against type as Eddie, the hyperactive casting agent. It's an emotionally raw performance — witness Eddie try and use cocaine to snort away his troubles — but one without the studied glumness that he frequently brings to the screen.

4. Fair Game could be retitled One Hundred Minutes of Sean Penn Yelling 'If We Don't Tell the Truth No One Will!' He's Joseph Wilson, the real-life whistleblower who claimed the Bush administration falsified information about the existence of weapons of mass destruction in Iraq. Penn is passionate, crafting a performance so big it has its own gravitational pull.

5. Finally there's All The King's Men, a movie memorable for all the wrong reasons. Penn is a fine actor, but as Willie Stark, (loosely based on Louisiana governor Huey P. Long) he is so over the top it's as if he's acting in a different movie than the rest of the cast. It's a vein-popping, arm-waving performance that suggests that maybe he should lay off the Red Bull.

Richard's ratings

The Divergent Series: Insurgent

The Gunman

Tracers

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Typecasting makes Sean Penn cranky

Movies. The actor of a certain age follows in the footsteps of Harrison Ford and Liam Neeson with Gunman — just don't tell him that

NED EHRBAR
Metro in NYC

Sean Penn stars in The Gunman. CONTRIBUTED

Sean Penn is just trying to promote his new film, The Gunman, but people keep bringing up the Oscars and that whole "green card" joke he made when Birdman won Best Picture.

"I'm always surprised by flagrant stupidity. I keep having more hope," he says.

"I have absolutely no apologies. In fact, I have a big f— you for anybody who is so stupid not to have gotten the irony when you've got a country that is so xenophobic. If they had their way, you wouldn't have great filmmakers like Alejandro (Gonzalez Inarritu) working in this country. Thank God we do."

As for critics who lambasted the actor for insensitivity on the immigration issue, he has some even more direct words: "I think they can be a bit more cheerful," Penn says with a shrug. "I think what's most offensive is we're attaching a protective sensibility to something which is meant to create self-censorship in people's interactions.

"I think that when somebody as special as Alejandro makes a film as special as Birdman was, that if he has a friend on stage, that maybe that friend wants to let him know that he won privately for a moment before the room knows and he did, cause there was a history there. So I wanted him to know it first, and that's who I was talking to, so I don't give a f— about all those other people."

But about The Gunman.

It's directed by Pierre Morel, who made Liam Neeson an action star with Taken.

And given that Penn is also a respected actor of a certain age, natural comparisons have been drawn — not that he agrees with the assessment.

"I thought Harrison Ford made a whole career on this stuff and I didn't think it was considered, like, a new trend or anything like that — what I call geriaction," Penn says.

"But there are aspects of this that have nothing to do with that, also. Admittedly there's a tremendous amount of action, one can't say it's not an action movie, but it's a different kind of movie also because it's not a 'wink at the audience' movie. This is more straight."

But action is action, and Penn, who got in impressive shape for the film — a shape he shows off by ditching his shirt whenever possible — didn't escape entirely without injuries.

"Little ones," he admits. "We got away without anything serious happening. There was an extraordinarily achy body at the end of the film, but that's accumulative."

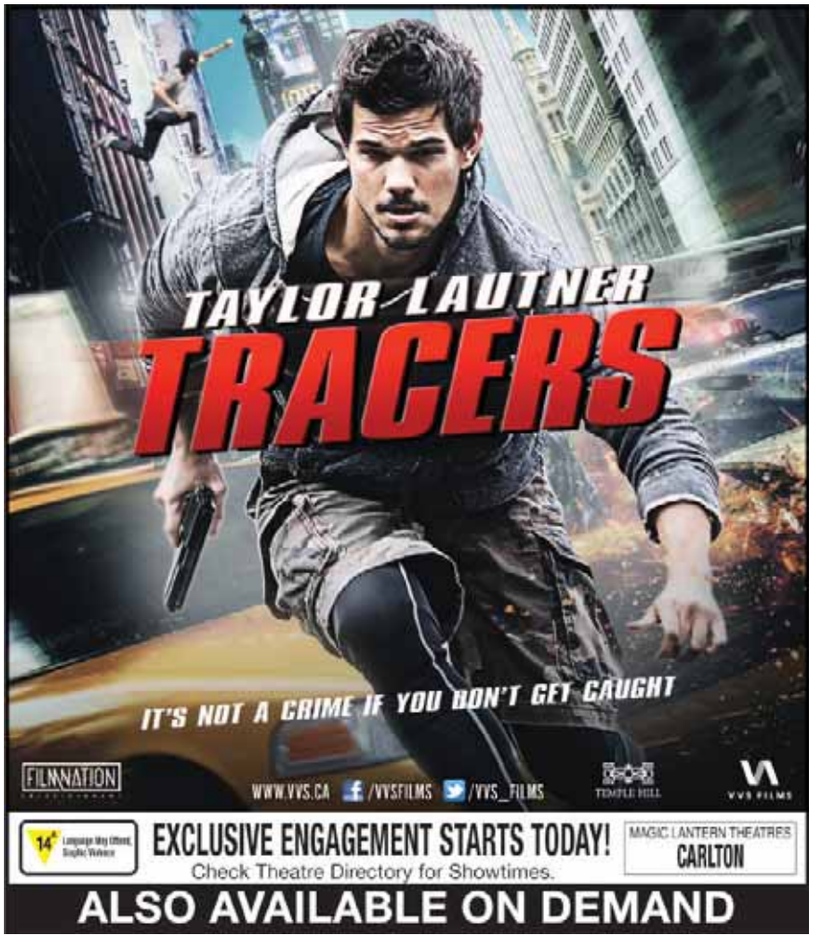
Even if The Gunman enjoys Taken levels of success, he's not necessarily eyeing a franchise, and not just because of the aches and pains.

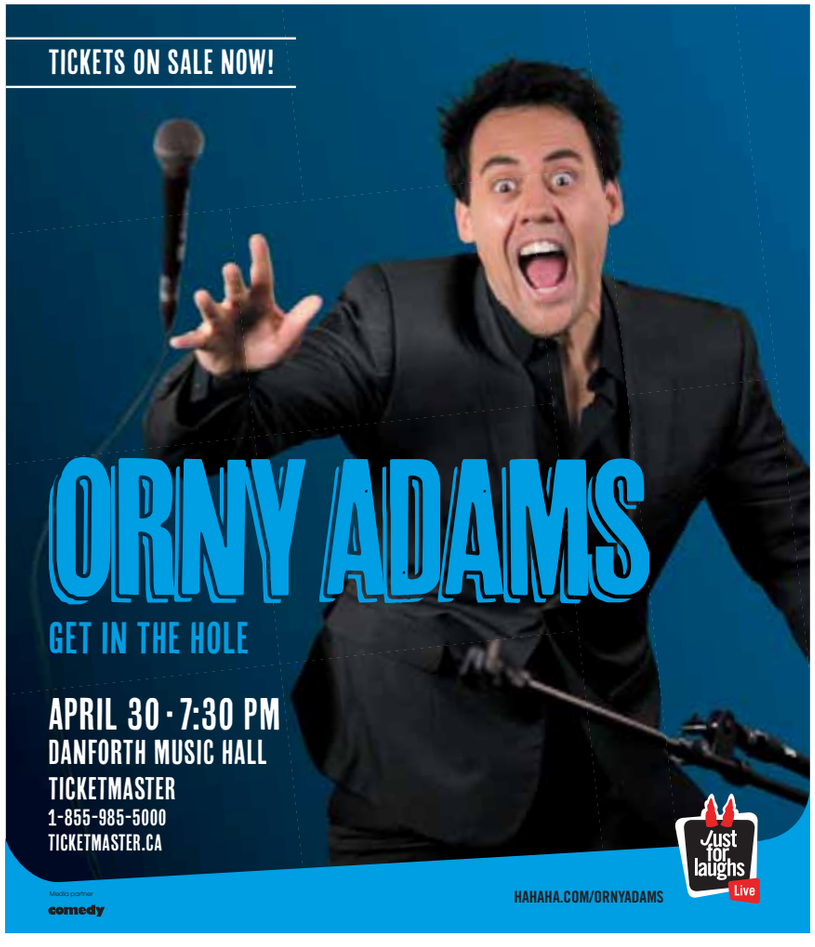
"I've never looked at a movie as beyond a movie, and in that case I wouldn't allow myself to think about that.

"I hope the best for this movie, we worked hard, a lot of people have worked hard and invested in this. I got projects I want to direct and that's what I want to focus on."

Of course, ask him immediately after he's finished filming, and he'd tell you he'll never make another movie again, sequel or no sequel.

"I think if I can remember what it feels like after it's done, that I would never do it again," Penn admits. "But it's a perishable awareness."





Now in theatres

Ratings and synopses courtesy of Rotten Tomatoes. For more movie reviews, trailers and news go to RottenTomatoes.com.

Ratings: *Certified Fresh:* *Fresh:* *Rotten:* *Audience response:* *Audience anticipation for the film:* +

Action/Adventure

The Gunman

Director. Pierre Morel

Stars. Sean Penn, Idris Elba

The Gunman, the new action thriller from Pierre Morel, the director of Taken, stars Sean Penn, Javier Bardem, Idris Elba, Ray Winstone and Mark Rylance.

Rotten Tomatoes™ score
Critics: 17% **Audience:** + 90%

Adventure/Sci-Fi

The Divergent Series: Insurgent

Director. Robert Schwentke

Stars. Shailene Woodley, Theo James

In this thrilling and nail-biting entry in the Divergent series, Tris and Four seek refuge outside the city with the Amity faction. They convene with other Divergents and exiled survivors, and plot to fight back against the warmongering Dauntless and despot Jeanine Matthews.

Rotten Tomatoes™ score
Critics: No reviews yet **Audience:** + 75%

Documentary

Seymour: An Introduction

Director. Ethan Hawke

Stars. Seymour Bernstein

Seymour Bernstein started playing the piano as a little boy, and by the time he turned 15 he was teaching it to others. He enjoyed a long and illustrious career as a performer before he gave it up to devote himself to helping others develop their own gifts. Ethan Hawke's gentle, meditative study is a warm and lucid portrait of Bernstein.

Rotten Tomatoes™ score
Critics: 100% **Audience:** + 81%

Action/Adventure

Tracers

Director. Daniel Benmayor

Stars. Taylor Lautner, Marie Avgeropoulos

After he crashes his bike into a super-sexy stranger named Nikki (Avgeropoulos), Cam (Lautner) is introduced to her crew — a team that uses parkour to pull off heists. Hoping to alleviate his deepening debt to a violent crime gang, Cam quickly joins the group. As the stakes get higher with more dangerous side ventures, the payouts get bigger.

Rotten Tomatoes™ score
Critics: 17% **Audience:** + 86%

Mystery/Suspense

Run All Night

Director. Jaume Collet-Serra

Stars. Liam Neeson, Natalie Martinez

Liam Neeson reunites with Unknown director Jaume Collet-Serra for this Warner Bros. thriller following a mob hit man and his estranged son (Joel Kinnaman) as they flee the wrath of a vengeful crime boss.

Rotten Tomatoes™ score
Critics: 59% **Audience:** + 90%

Drama/Comedy

Loitering With Intent

Director. Adam Rapp

Stars. Ivan Martín, Michael Godere

When out-of-work-actors Raphael (Ivan Martin) and Dominic (Michael Godere) hustle a prominent New York producer into believing they've written a hot movie script, they have 10 days to deliver the goods or lose their last opportunity for a big break.

Rotten Tomatoes™ score
Critics: 33% **Audience:** 32%

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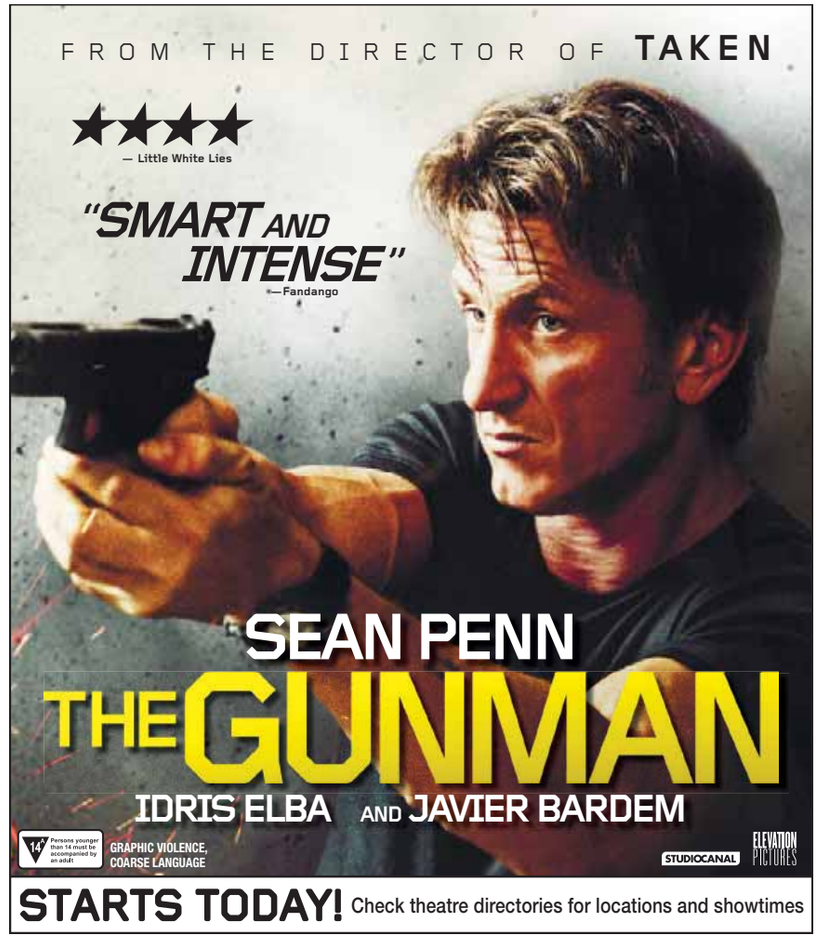

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White God opens March 27. CONTRIBUTED

White God lets the dogs have their day

Film. Animal trainer Teresa Ann Miller talks training over 250 pups for White God

STEVE GOW
scene@metronews.ca

For animal trainer Teresa Ann Miller, the only thing more difficult than working with more than 250 dogs on the Budapest set of White God was working with all those dogs' trainers.

"That was tough, and especially for the amount that we had," said the L.A.-based canine expert about the Hungarian dramatic movie. "They knew my reputation in Europe because I had been there for 20 years on a very successful TV show but again, when you go there with your trainers, you never know how that relationship is going to go."

Lucky for Miller, the experience was exceptional and the acclaimed drama about a stray dog's quest to find its 13-year-old owner even won the acclaimed Un Certain Regard prize at the Cannes Film Festival.

While the premise may sound similar to heart-tugging family classics like Lassie Come Home, White God's journey is violent and features packs of canines in scenes involving dogfights and dangerous traffic.

"It's always going to be safe," insisted Miller of the turbulent traffic scene.

Although the lovable pup was protected with a safety band tied to his waist, Miller admits filming a dog dodging fast cars takes an entire crew.

"I teach him to step forward (and) step back and it's kind of a dance we do. Once he learns those cues, it's a matter of putting in those cars," said Miller. "He really was in no danger (but) he really looked trapped and isolated, trying to cross the street."

While the movie is winning praise as a metaphor for fomenting cultural strife in Europe, Miller is simply appreciating the added attention for her particularly passive style of training.

"A mistake that people make is they try to dominate the dog," advised Miller. "I don't yell at them. In fact, I accomplish more by not saying anything ... over-dominating a dog only creates a fearful dog that isn't going to participate in things, let alone work on a film without a leash."

Dogs will be dogs

"Most of the training I do is really focused on not just an animal being part of a film, but the animal being a character," said Miller. "I might capture them doing something a little more natural before I have them run out of the scene. That's just allowing a dog to be a dog."

Animal trainer Teresa Ann Miller. MAGNOLIA PICTURES

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Dustin Hoffman plays a choirmaster in Boychoir. CONTRIBUTED

Dustin Hoffman gets to play at his first love in music role

Movie. Wannabe-musician-turned-actor tickled to star as Boychoir's choirmaster

RICHARD CROUSE
scene@metronews.ca

As an actor, two-time Academy Award winner Dustin Hoffman has created some indelible characters — Midnight Cowboy's Ratso Rizzo and Tootsie to name a couple — but from an early age he dreamed of being a professional pianist.

"I wanted to be a musician but I was never talented enough," he says, "so I'm not a musician. I have small hands — and by the way there is no correlation to your hands and personal parts — so I can't reach much more than an octave."

In the new film Boychoir he shows his musical side playing a choirmaster to a group of talented youngsters.

As a young man, he studied classical piano, but when it became apparent he'd never turn pro, he tried his hand at acting.

"I had been flunking out of junior college and somebody said, 'Try acting. Nobody flunks acting.'"

Enrolling at the Pasadena Playhouse, he shared a room with Robert Duvall and studied with Gene Hackman.

"No one told me I was a good actor," he says. "No one told Gene, and there was a third person, Duvall. They are both much, much older than me. If someone was to say to the three of us in those early days that we were going to be successful, forget about being movie stars, everyone would have laughed. It's kind of a freak accident that it happened to all three of us."

Hoffman's big break came in the form of Benjamin Braddock in The Graduate. Robert Redford was considered for the part, but director Mike Nichols rejected the traditionally handsome actor — "You can't play it," he told Redford. "You can never play a loser" — in favour of the unknown Hoffman. The Graduate made him a star and is now considered a classic, but almost 50 years later he remembers how the critics savaged his performance.

The barbs hurt at the time, but he doesn't let them get under his skin any more. "Critics are ... I shouldn't say," he laughs, "I don't know if anyone grows up saying, 'When I grow up, I want to be a critic.'"

Quoted

"I had been flunking out of junior college and somebody said, 'Try acting, Nobody flunks acting.'"
Dustin Hoffman

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The kids haven't changed, we have

The Breakfast Club.
After 30 years, breakout teen film's flaws exposed

CHRIS ALEXANDER
scene@metronews.ca

Make no mistake, for better or worse, late writer-director John Hughes was the titan of '80s teen angst, responsible for a slew of pictures that aimed to humorously examine the average American teenager while amassing much critical acclaim and box-office success in the process.

But Hughes' magnum opus is, without question 1985's The Breakfast Club, a talky tale in which five misfit teens endure a day of Saturday detention together and ultimately realize that they're not so different after all.

Sure, the film is often funny and the then-young cast is game, with Anthony Michael-Hall, Ally Sheedy and Judd Nelson standouts with their expert comic timing and dramatic chops.

But for all its good intentions and repute, the hard truth is that The Breakfast Club stands more today as an exercise in high camp than a realistic peek into high school life.

The fact that anyone once took it seriously at all is a potent indictment of just how shallow and naive the "me decade" truly was.

In honour of the film's 30th anniversary, Cineplex is bringing it back to theatres for two showings on March 21 and 25.

Here Metro takes a brief look at some of The Breakfast Club's least appetizing elements — a list sure to offend those who grew up with the film.

Everyone's white

Hughes' previous film Sixteen Candles stands as one of the most racist teen films ever (Long Duck Dong, anyone?) so for The Breakfast Club, he decided to just paint the screen alabaster and call it a day.

Everyone here is white. And clean. And well-fed, and witty.

Including the faculty.

Get over it, kids!

These whiny, self-obsessed kids may have a few hang-ups, but suffering to the point of sympathy? Hardly. From Hall's suicide attempt after getting a bad grade in shop class, to Sheedy's dandruff, none of it rings true. Even troubled, boorish bad boy Judd Nelson somehow makes it to detention on time. The fact that Nelson even shows up to detention at all, single-handedly revokes his cartoonish anti-establishment status.

Sexual assault ain't funny

If Sixteen Candles had date rape played for laughs, the scene in which Nelson, hiding under Molly Ringwald's desk, eyeballing her crotch and biting down hard while she stifles her shock to save face, is equally wrong.

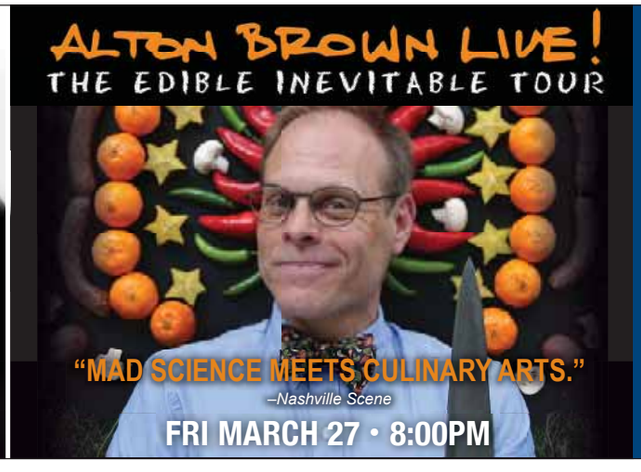
Designed to be lewdly amusing, it's just kind of unpleasant, with Hughes suggesting that Ringwald is only mildly annoyed by the incident, in turn painting Nelson as nothing more than a brat, rather than the criminal he is.

Emilio Estevez's dance

Add up the most cringe-inducing moments seen on screen in the '80s and all of them combined wouldn't come close to equalling the operatic shame of seeing a stoned Estevez break into the most awesomely idiotic dance in film history.

Said spastic herky-jerky is meant to signify Estevez's rebellion against the confines of his father's athletic expectations, or something.

Whatever the hell it is, it's a jaw-dropper!



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Carl the janitor spills tantalizing Breakfast Club secrets

Coming-of-age film's 30th anniversary.
Canadian actor takes us behind-the-scenes of the '80s teen classic

For anyone who grew up loving The Breakfast Club, take a look at the film today and see who you most identify with now, advises its Canadian co-star John Kapelos.

Thirty years after the teen drama introduced the world to a brain, an athlete, a basket case, a princess and a criminal, John Hughes's seminal coming-of-age film is marking its anniversary with a digitally remastered re-release hitting Canadian theatres on Saturday and March 25.

Fans revisiting the classic flick may find themselves looking differently at the film's two world-weary adults — Paul Gleason's bitter assistant principal Richard (Dick) Vernon and Kapelos's straight-talking Carl, the janitor.

"These movies are like prisms, you can see them from different angles," says Kapelos, who notes that friends now tell him they identify most with Dick.

"Obviously, when you see them from a younger angle you go, 'Oh yeah, I'm totally Molly,' or 'I'm totally this.'"

Get the London, Ont. native reminiscing, and the stories flow easily — about forging a bond with Hughes that extended to roles on 16 Candles and Weird Science; about spending eight years before that with Second City (where John Candy was his teacher); and going on to a diverse career in film and TV, with credits including Transparent, Justified, The Republic of Doyle, and Forever Knight.

For trivia fans, Kapelos offers up a couple of little known facts about The Breakfast Club:

1. On the cutting room floor is a lengthy monologue from Carl predicting where each of the kids would end up decades later

"Basically I told Molly, 'You're going to be a suburban mom driving a Ford, you're going to have stretch marks from here to Cleveland, five kids, unhappy, alcoholic.' And then I go to Michael, he's going to be a big lawyer, make big money. (I say), 'You're going to work on Wall Street, be a big jerk, and you're going to have a big heart attack. Dead at 42.'

"'OK, Judd, you're going to be a felon, you're going to be in Chino (prison) for five years, then you're going to go to (the) penitentiary ... Ally, you're going to be a loft artist. You're going to live off the kindness of others, you're never going to be happy. Your art will never be recognized and actually it won't be that good ...' (Hughes) would say, 'Too tough.'"

2. Somewhere, there is a DVD full of The Breakfast Club outtakes

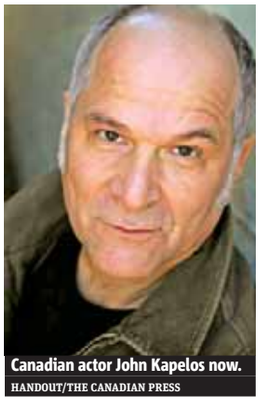
"Molly told me that Nancy Hughes, John's wife, has a DVD copy of the movie with all the extras that will never see the light of day," Kapelos says tantalizingly.

What is on it, exactly, could never be known. But given Hughes's penchant to shoot multiple takes and encourage off-script improvisations, there's a wealth of material to draw from, says Kapelos.

"When I see the movie, I just remember all those things that aren't in there."

THE CANADIAN PRESS

John Kapelos as Carl the janitor in 1985's The Breakfast Club. CONTRIBUTED



Canadian actor John Kapelos now.
HANDOUT/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Carl was a last-minute gig

Production had already begun on The Breakfast Club when Kapelos got a call asking him to be in the movie.

- The last-minute gig apparently followed a controversial take on Carl by SCTV comic Rick Moranis, who took a few too many liberties according to Kirk Honeycutt's biography, John Hughes: A Life in Film.

Mekhi Phifer is just along for the ride

Insurgent. The actor says he picks his roles based on what's good, plain and simple

RICHARD CROUSE
scene@metronews.ca

Years before Mekhi Phifer played the stern-faced Dauntless enforcement officer Max in this weekend's The Divergent Series: Insurgent, he displayed a dauntless attitude that got him his first acting job.

The year was 1994, the movie was Spike Lee's Clockers and over 1,000 people showed up for an open casting call.

"I went with my cousin," he says, "not knowing anything about the audition or open casting call process. Spike Lee auditioned me about seven or eight different times. I had to read with Harvey Keitel and Isaiah Washington and do improvisations. I had never done that type of stuff before so to have gotten that was a whirlwind; I just thought that was the norm. That's how you cast movies — a thousand people come in."

He won the lead role and parlayed that into a string of memorable characters in movies like 8 Mile, and TV shows like ER, where he played Dr. Greg Pratt for six seasons and the Dr. Who spinoff, the sci-fi series Torchwood: Miracle Day.

"I am a big fan of sci-fi," he says. "And that was part of the allure (to signing on for the Divergent series), but the other part was that it was good. I'm not looking for one particular genre or one particular type of film. I usually just gravitate towards what's good."

He plays Max, leader of Dauntless, the warrior bloc of a Big Brother-style government that has divided the post-apocalyptic Chicago into five factions. In the new film, his job is to hunt down and capture fugitives Tris (Shailene Woodley) and boyfriend Four (Theo James) because she is divergent — a person who cannot be pigeonholed into just one designation.

"He's not a villain at all in any way, shape or form," he says. "He's tasked with protecting the society and I really feel that he believes in expunging the divergents and the rebel factions. He's not doing it in a malicious way. He's not getting pleasure from other people's pain. He looks at it as a necessary evil."

No spoilers for Phifer

Phifer hasn't read the Veronica Roth books that make up the source material for the films. "For me it seemed like more fun to do the series and then read the books and compare." So he's not sure what's going to happen with his character, but he hopes Max comes back for next year's instalment, Allegiant: Part 1.

- "I don't know what's happening next, so I'm on the journey with the audience," he says. "I would love to see some of who he is come full circle."

Mekhi Phifer plays Max in The Divergent Series: Insurgent, out this weekend. CONTRIBUTED

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Mexico's image-conscious government did not want the new James Bond film Spectre to feature a Mexican villain, according to leaked Sony emails Spectre premieres later this year, on November 6. CONTRIBUTED

Bond baddie could not be Mexican: Reports

Production. Mexican government offered tax breaks for filming Spectre in the country in exchange for a better image, according to leaked Sony emails

Mexico has plenty of murderous and eccentric drug lords, but its image-conscious government did not want the new James Bond film Spectre to feature a Mexican villain when 007 comes blazing into town.

Bond producer Michael Wilson acknowledged Wednesday that local authorities were concerned about seeing a Mexican cast as the bad guy when the movie starring Daniel Craig is shot in the country.

But he denied reports that the script was changed at the request of executives from Sony Pictures and MGM Studios, eager to save money after the government offered $14 million in tax incentives in return for a better image.

The website taxanalysts.com, citing leaked Sony emails, reported that the requests for the script included having an international leader assassinated instead of Mexico City's mayor, and that Bond's nemesis should not be Mexican.

"I think we never had the villain as Mexican so it wasn't something we had to change," Wilson said, acknowledging that it was among "some of the issues" authorities had raised. "The villain was always an Italian."

The government provided technical support, like getting permits to shoot in certain locations or advising on things such as which security force would be involved in certain situations, he said. "It's more like us asking questions and then discussing it with (Mexican authorities) than them demanding anything in the way of changing" the screenplay, he said.

"I know they want to see, they would love to see Mexico in a good light and we are not here to put Mexico in a bad light," Wilson said, refusing to confirm how much the government offered in tax incentives.

Wilson said a Mexican joint venture that was formed to support tourism helped filmmakers secure "financial and practical support," but he did not elaborate. AFP

Quoted

"I think we never had the villain as Mexican so it wasn't something we had to change."

Bond producer Michael Wilson denies the Mexican government demanded Spectre put the nation in a better light.

Casting

Bond girl wasn't worried about her country's image

Stephanie Sigman, the first Bond Girl from Mexico, said she was never worried about how her country would be depicted in the film. "I have made all kinds of movies, which look at good and bad sides, and I think there are many layers in countries, situations and including in us as human beings," she said. Wilson said producers always planned to have a Mexican Bond girl, denying reports that it was one of the government's demands. AFP

ADVERTISING FEATURE

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THOUSANDS OF CANADIANS CHOOSE ECUADOR FOR THEIR RECREATION AND INVESTMENT PROPERTIES

The trend is not new: each year, thousands of Canadians flee the cold and the snow, heading south to sun destinations for weeks or months at a time. While many dream of owning a property in the South, the uncertainty surrounding the entire process can make taking the next step somewhat daunting. Not to worry! Since 2010 the Canadian company HolaEcuador has been helping Canadians succeed in acquiring their own piece of paradise.

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With a solid understanding of the challenges future property owners face, HolaEcuador took it upon themselves to simplify and demystify the process of acquiring a residence in the sun. After having visited Mexico, Costa Rica and Panama, company co-owner Gordon Poole chose Ecuador as the ideal location. The quality of the country's infrastructure, incredible biodiversity, low cost of living, beautiful landscapes, accessible and modern healthcare system and year-round mild climate were the decisive factors.

"Since 2010 we have helped hundreds of Canadians acquire a property on the Pacific coast of Ecuador", says M. Poole. "We are literally creating an entire seaside village. Of the 1,700 properties that we had available at the start of the project, only 600 remain unsold. And now with the majority of the site infrastructure completed, home construction is ramping up quickly."

Mr. and Mrs. Oulianov, from Ottawa, purchased their property in HolaEcuador's urban development. "The ability to sign a Canadian contract was reassuring for us", indicates Mrs. Oulianov. "Furthermore, the HolaEcuador representatives here in our area answered all of our questions and helped us throughout the entire purchase process. The whole experience was very positive!" The following comments were shared by Mrs. Finlay, who felt reassured by the progress of the construction of her house and the project in general: "What was promised, was delivered!

GOOD TIME TO INVEST

For now, Ecuador remains a relatively well-kept secret. Properties in Ecuador are much more affordable than in similar tourist destinations, which is one of the main reasons that Canadian travellers and investors are flocking to the region. "Prices reflect what was available in Costa Rica 15 years ago, but in a country where first-rate and modern infrastructure is already in place" confirms Mr. Poole. "Further, the Ecuadorian government is very stable and the currency is the US dollar, which is also very reassuring for investors.", he adds.

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A very Canadian way to welcome spring, eh

Appetizer. Celebrate the new season with this Sesame and Maple Appetizer Bread

RICARDO COOKS
Chef Ricardo
Ricardo Magazine

Want to take maple syrup in a savoury direction? Do it with this recipe that honours Canada's most beloved export.

This recipe serves eight. COURTESY RICARDOCUISINE.COM

Ingredients

Dough
- 1/2 cup (125 ml) warm water
- 1/2 tsp (1 1/2 ml) maple syrup
- 1 1/4 cups (175 g) unbleached all-purpose flour
- 1 tsp instant dry yeast
- 1 tsp salt

Topping
- 1/4 cup (35 g) toasted sesame seeds
- Freshly ground pepper, to taste
- 1/4 cup (60 ml) olive oil
- 2 tbsp (30 ml) maple syrup
- Fleur de sel

Dough

1. In a bowl, combine the water and maple syrup. Set aside.

2. In bowl with a wooden spoon, combine flour, yeast and salt. Add the water mixture and combine into a soft ball. Knead the dough for about 3 minutes on a floured surface.

3. Place dough in clean and lightly oiled bowl. Coat dough with the oil. Cover bowl with damp cloth and leave in a warm and moist place for about 1 hour or until the dough has doubled in volume.

Topping

1. On a work surface sprinkled with sesame seeds, roll half of the dough at a time into an 8-inch (20 cm) disc, taking care to coat with sesame seeds. Sprinkle pepper on each side of the dough and press lightly to make it adhere.

2. In a non-stick skillet over medium heat, brown 1 bread at a time in half the oil for about 2 minutes on each side. Add 1 tbsp of maple syrup and caramelize one side of the bread. Flip the bread on a cutting board. Cut in half and then cut into 1/2-inch (1.5 cm) strips. Sprinkle with salt. Clean the pan before cooking the second bread. Serve with a glass of cider or beer. **FOLLOW RICARDO ON SOCIAL MEDIA AND ON RICARDOCUISINE.COM OR SUBSCRIBE TO HIS MAGAZINE'S ENGLISH EDITION, WHICH LAUNCHED IN 2014.**

Sweetening the soup pot

This Cream of Carrot and Turnip Soup with Maple Syrup may remind you of the Swedish or Norwegian dishes of mashed potatoes with carrots and rutabaga called rotmos and kålrabistappe, respectively.

This recipe serves eight to 10 people. COURTESY RICARDOCUISINE.COM

Ingredients

- 4 cups (440 g) carrots, peeled and sliced
- 4 cups (600 g) rutabaga, peeled and cubed
- 2 onions, chopped
- 3 tbsp (42 g) butter
- 8 cups (2 litres) chicken broth
- 2 russet potatoes, peeled and cubed
- 3 tbsp (45 ml) maple syrup
- 1/4 cup (60 ml) 35% cream
- Salt and pepper

1. In large pot, cook carrots, rutabaga and onions in butter 5 minutes, without browning.

2. Add the broth, potatoes and maple syrup. Bring to a boil. Cover and simmer for about 25 minutes or until the vegetables are tender.

3. In a blender, purée the soup until smooth. Add the cream. Season with salt and pepper. Serve hot. **RICARDO**

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Spring in a bottle

LIQUID ASSETS
Peter Rockwell
@therealwineguy
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My calendar lies.

It says that today is the first day of spring. Out my window here in Nova Scotia, it's beginning to look a lot more like Christmas.

Even with snow on the ground, I'm embracing the change of seasons by diving into a glass of something white, ripe and fruity.

Though fruitier reds have hogged the spotlight of late, there's nothing like a bright, floral white when it comes to expressing the liquid personality of spring.

Argentina's Torrontés grape is a highly aromatic berry that smells so good you'd almost be tempted to dab a little behind each ear.

Sometimes all that perfume can be a bit much, so it's often blended with other grapes to soften the assault on your nasal passages.

While Fuzion's 2013 Alta Torrontés Pinot Grigio ($9.95 - $12.99) still smells great, the addition of a touch of fresh, citrusy Pinot Grigio brings out the fleshy pear and stone fruit of the Torrontés.

A good match with spicy Asian cuisine, grilled chicken and fresh shellfish.

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NHL

Leafs' weaknesses laid bare by Sharks

Logan Couture had a goal and an assist as the San Jose Sharks dispatched the Toronto Maple Leafs 4-1 on Thursday night.

Couture's goal early in the second period was the eventual winner for San Jose (35-28-8), which ended a two-game skid. Tomas Hertl, Melker Karlsson and Tommy Wingels also scored for the Sharks, as Antti Niemi made 27 saves for the win.

Joe Thornton added two assists for San Jose.

Jake Gardiner was the lone scorer for Toronto (27-39-6), which has dropped four straight. Jonathan Bernier stopped 38 shots.

Hertl opened the scoring for the Sharks on a costly turnover by the Leafs. An errant Toronto pass went deep into the defensive zone thanks to a poor line change. Chris Tierney beat defenceman Eric Brewer to the puck, skated behind the net and fed Hertl for the easy deflection past Bernier.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

NCAA Davids own Day 1

March Madness.
No. 3 seeds Baylor and Iowa State go down in tournament's first games

Baylor was in complete control, and then it fell apart in the final three minutes. It was quite the surprise for coach Scott Drew.

No. 3 seed Baylor was unable to handle Georgia State's full-court defensive pressure down the stretch and lost 57-56 on R.J. Hunter's long three-pointer in the closing seconds of their NCAA Tournament game on Thursday.

Rico Gathers' two foul shots with 2:54 left put Baylor up by 12, but the Bears (24-10) didn't score again. They finished with 21 turnovers.

"The thing I'm disappointed with is all year long we've executed down the stretch," Drew said. "We've been a tough team, and I feel bad the way that the last five minutes went."

Hunter's three with 2.7 seconds left capped the comeback for No. 14 seed Georgia State and knocked his proud father, coach Ron Hunter, right off his seat.

Pesky Georgia State (25-9) forced three crucial turnovers as Hunter scored nine in a row during the closing surge, including a three-pointer that brought chants of "R.J. 3! R.J. 3! R.J. 3!" from Panthers fans at the Jacksonville Veterans Memorial Arena.

The junior guard's steal and layup trimmed Baylor's lead to 56-53, and he drained another NBA-range three for the win after the Bears' Kenny Chery, from Montreal, missed the front end of a 1-and-1 that could have put the game away.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Brackets busted

0.7%

Between the Panthers' upset of Baylor and UAB's takedown of Iowa State, two No. 3 seeds falling that quickly on the tournament's first big day left almost every bracket blemished.

ESPN says that three games into Thursday, more than 99 per cent of the brackets submitted on their website were damaged by the upsets. That leaves only about 87,000 out of 11.6 million still with a perfect bracket or 0.7 per cent.

Georgia State's R.J. Hunter strokes the game-winning three-pointer over Baylor's Lester Medford on Thursday in Jacksonville, Fla. KEVIN C. COX/GETTY IMAGES

Matthew Wuest, Metro reporter, CapGeek founder, dies of cancer

Matthew Wuest METRO FILE

Matthew Wuest poured his heart into his work.

The former Metro Halifax sports reporter and CapGeek founder was always the one writing the stories, often shying away from having stories written about him.

Wuest died during the early morning hours Thursday at Victoria General Hospital in Halifax, wife Melanie Patten by his side, following a 2-1/2-year battle with colon cancer.

While he was never one to have the media spotlight shining his way, Wuest's story is one that deserves to be told.

"He was just a great guy who really loved what he did," Metro Halifax managing editor Philip Croucher said Thursday. "I've never seen anyone do it better."

Wuest was dedicated to doing the best possible job, yet was never satisfied with the end result.

The Stanley, N.B., native was always trying to better himself, whether covering local sports such as the Halifax Mooseheads, Halifax Rainmen and Atlantic University Sport for his full-time job with Metro, or developing what became one of the most popular online hockey resources out there, an NHL salary cap review he ran out of the "CapGeek offices," his north-end Halifax home.

"There were days I'd wonder how he would get stories and information, he was so connected to the sports world, both nationally and internationally," said Croucher, who also worked with Wuest at defunct Halifax newspaper The Daily News.

Wuest was a humble soul, happy to collect the facts and conduct interviews, and as his recent quiet shutting down of CapGeek shows, apt to stay out of headlines himself.

"He didn't go for the attention that he could have gotten through that site," Croucher said of CapGeek.

"He was able to do that, and still without question, be the best sports reporter in Halifax — that speaks volumes to the talent that he was."

KRISTEN LIPSCOMBE/METRO

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Kyle Lowry's status for tonight's game in Chicago is up in the air.
THE CANADIAN PRESS

K-Low injury bad timing for Raptors

NBA. Kyle Lowry's skill and leadership needed now more than ever

At a time when the Raptors are scrambling to get some spunk back after a lacklustre stretch of play, their star guard and de facto leader gets banged up and may have to sit out.

It's not what you'd want as you head out for a tough road game after stitching together your first back-to-back wins in a month's time, but c'est la vie. Coach Dwane Casey put Kyle Lowry's odds to play in Chicago Friday night at 50/50. He said the injury Lowry took on a baseline tumble against Minnesota amounts to soreness and is "nothing structural."

Yet, as Patrick Patterson put it after the team's shootaround Thursday, it'd be better to have the all-star sit now than playoff time.

"Of course we'd rather have Kyle out there than not out there, but, at the end of the day, we want him healthy," said Patterson. "We don't want him to have any nagging or lagging injuries or tolls on his body once playoffs start."

Despite a relatively low-injury season, the Toronto club has had a decent chunk of games where Casey's most-used starting five — Lowry, DeMar DeRozan, Terrence Ross, Amir Johnson and Jonas Valanciunas — are unable to play at the same time. DeRozan, for instance, went down with a torn tendon in late November and sat out 21 games, while an overworked Lowry took three games off recently to rest and heal.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Quoted

"It will just cause other people to step up."

Raptors forward Patrick Patterson
speaking about Kyle Lowry's back injury

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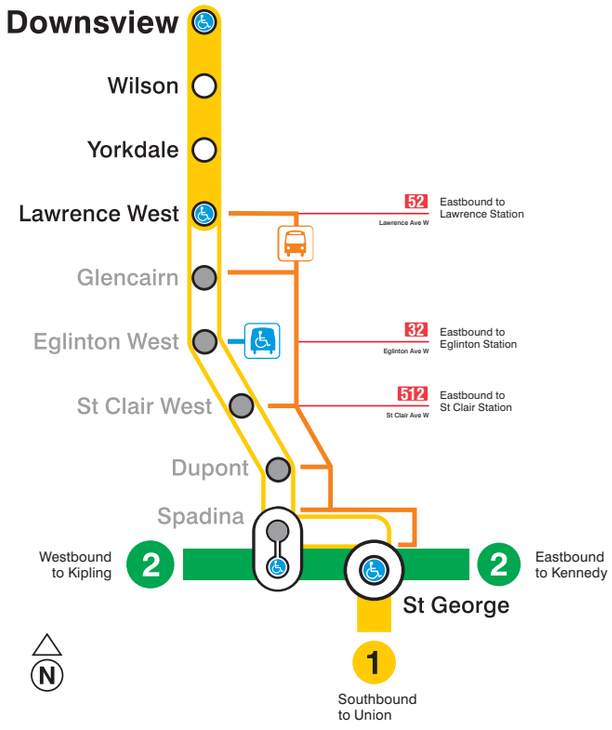

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TORONTO TRANSIT COMMISSION

Vonn simply super again

Lindsey Vonn won the World Cup super-G title for the fifth time after winning the last race in the discipline on Thursday at the season-ending finals in Meribel, France. The day after clinching the downhill title, the 30-year-old American extended her record number of crystal globes in women's alpine skiing to 19, equalling Swedish great Ingemar Stenmark's total. ALEXIS BOICHARD/AGENCE ZOOM, GETTY IMAGES

WEEKEND, March 20-22, 2015

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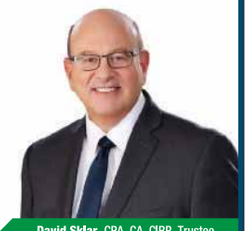

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AUGMENTED REALITY

Stuck on 12 Across? Scan this image with your Metro News app for today's crossword and Sudoku answers. It's OK. No one's watching.

Horoscopes by Sally Brompton

♈ Aries
March 21 - April 20
The Sun moves into your sign today and a new solar year begins. Just how good that year will be depends on the things you do over the next few days.

♉ Taurus
April 21 - May 21
If someone blames you for something that was not your fault, let them know you are not happy about it, but don't go and make an enemy of them.

♊ Gemini
May 22 - June 21
According to the planets you need to ignore other people's advice and go back to basics. Start by asking yourself how and why you have arrived at your current position.

♋ Cancer
June 22 - July 23
The Sun moves into the area of your chart that governs your social and professional status today. Over the next few weeks you will get many opportunities to better yourself.

♌ Leo
July 24 - Aug. 23
Something you thought of as a problem won't be seen as such any more because you refuse to take it seriously. Your attitude will soften over the next day.

♍ Virgo
Aug. 24 - Sept. 23
Over the past few weeks the emphasis has been on partnerships of an emotional nature but as of today it will shift to partnerships of a business or financial nature.

♎ Libra
Sept. 24 - Oct. 23
The Sun's change of signs today means you are halfway through your solar year: a good point to look back and take stock of how far you have come.

♏ Scorpio
Oct. 24 - Nov. 22
With the Sun moving into the work and wellbeing area of your chart today you'll need to do more in some areas and less in others. Get the balance right.

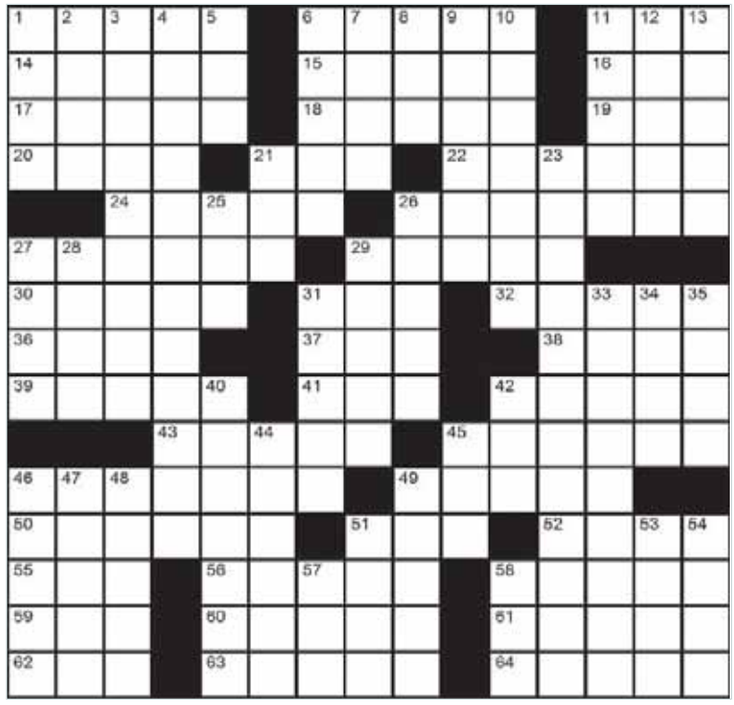
♐ Sagittarius
Nov. 23 - Dec. 21
Refuse to settle for second best. Your confidence will soar over the next few days and you will start to believe that anything is possible. One of the best times of the year is about to begin.

♑ Capricorn
Dec. 22 - Jan. 20
There is no such thing as coincidence and if you feel yourself drawn towards a certain person it is because your fates are connected.

♒ Aquarius
Jan. 21 - Feb. 19
Now that the Sun is moving into one of the more sociable areas of your chart you won't have any problems getting across your point of view.

♓ Pisces
Feb. 20 - March 20
Get serious about your dreams. Look at the plans you have made in recent weeks and ask yourself if you are aiming too high or too low. Most likely it's the latter. Raise your sights and your game will follow.

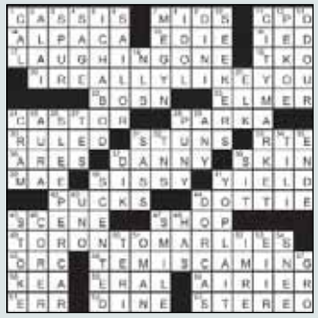
Crossword: Canada Across and Down by Kelly Ann Buchanan



Across
1. Spot __ (BC shrimp)
6. Orange variety
11. Tea holder
14. Second-year students, briefly
15. Perry __ (Mens-wear label)
16. Completely
17. "__ __ by Sea" (1996)
18. Novelist Evelyn
19. Electronics co.
20. Shaker stuff
21. Zoologist's 'foot'
22. Protector-from-harm charm
24. Bubbled tool
26. Edmund Fitzgerald's load: 2 wds. (More at #4-Down)
27. Financial motive
29. _, _ __ _ (Multiple choice options)
30. Altercation: 2 wds.
31. "__ Maria"
32. "Frozen" (2013) Queen's
36. Cuckoos
37. Sea: French
38. "__ __ blame." (My bad!)
39. OKs
41. Cartoonist Mr. Spiegelman
42. Wings hit: letter + wd.
43. Creature
45. Typing: It's to a Q's left: 2 wds.
46. NFLD: Cape __. __ Ecological Reserve
49. Venture
50. Key in again
51. Bulg. neighbour
52. Justin Bieber's "That Should __ __"
55. 'Thrice'-meaning prefix
56. "__ Was a Lady" (1945)
58. Philadelphia athlete
59. __ _ crossroads
60. Mythical maiden
61. West Yorkshire city in England
62. Elle: English
63. Dallas' state denizen
64. Actor Mr. Davis

Down
1. Calif. clock settings
2. Seating near the stage: wd. + letter
3. Ms. Kotero of "Purple Rain" (1984)
4. "The searchers all say they'd have made __ __ if..." - Gordon Lightfoot
5. Banking acronym
6. "Foolish Games" singer
7. Unluckily
8. Bug
9. The Marriage of __, by Mozart, 1786
10. Canadian actor Shawn
11. Gambling destination, with Monte
12. Gastric trouble
13. Dish
21. Kibbles eater
23. Cirque of the __ (Northwest Territories mountaineering challenge)
25. Mr. Diesel
26. French composer Jacques
27. Talk to God
28. Germanic letter
29. Deflect
31. Stockpile
33. Brigitte Bardot makeup look: 2 wds.
34. Dip _ __ in (Test the lake's coldness)
35. __ Music Canada
40. __ Mounds (Approx. 2000-year-old burial site near Peterborough, Ontario)
42. Honking source
44. "__-__, Captain!"
45. Mr. Arnold
46. Miss: Spanish [abbr. plural]
47. Zipper bits
48. __. __ (Alberta peak named after Arctic explorer John)
49. Alpine dry wind
51. Kelly of daytime
53. __-spa
54. Celtic language
57. Rapper/actor known by these three letters
58. Andy Capp's wife

Yesterday's Crossword

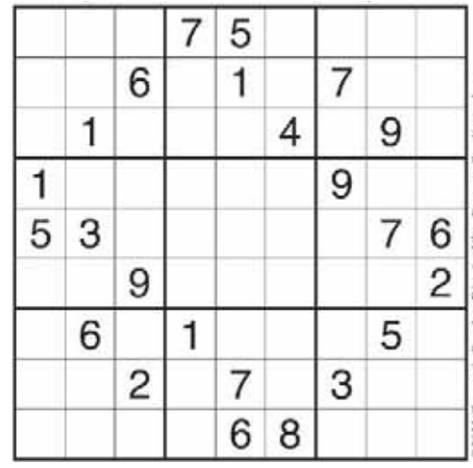


Online

See today's answers at metronews.ca/answers

Conceptis Sudoku by Dave Green

How to play
Fill in the grid, so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1-9. There is no math involved.



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Yesterday's Sudoku

4	8	1	5	7	2	3	6	9
5	7	3	4	9	6	8	1	2
2	6	9	1	8	3	4	7	5
9	4	8	3	6	5	1	2	7
6	5	7	2	1	8	9	3	4
1	3	2	9	4	7	5	8	6
3	1	5	6	2	9	7	4	8
8	2	4	7	5	1	6	9	3
7	9	6	8	3	4	2	5	1

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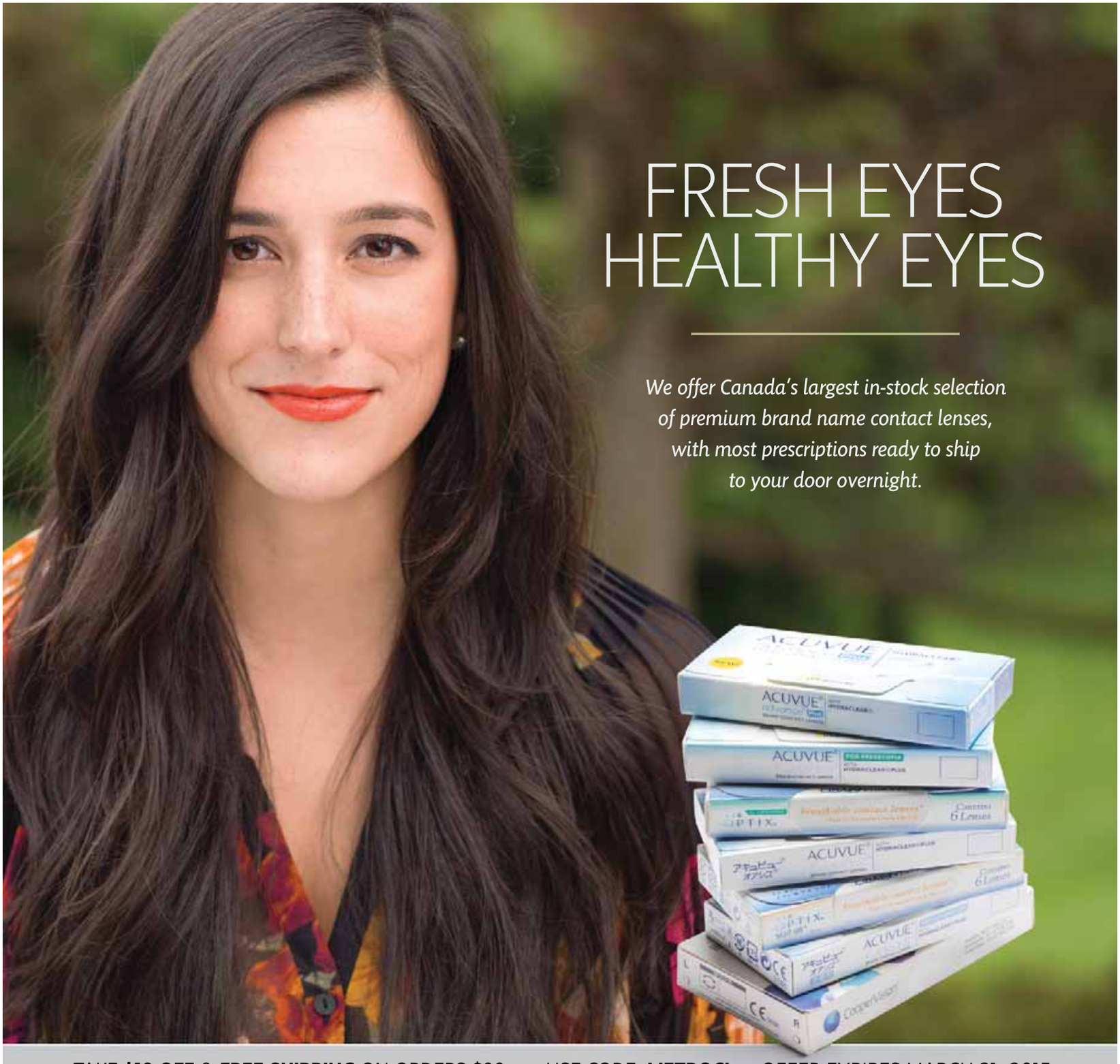

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